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**RUSSIAN DECISION-MAKING AND OPTIONS
REGARDING U.S. NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE**

by

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March 2000

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U.S. NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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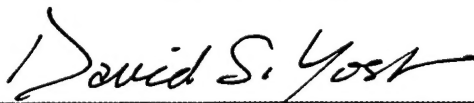
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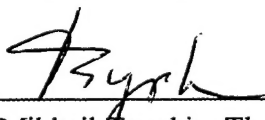
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Clinton administration has announced that it will in the summer of 2000 make a decision as to whether the United States will proceed with deployment of a limited National Missile Defense (NMD) system. This decision is expected to be politically volatile. NMD has the potential to bring about a revolutionary shift in military strategy. However, the decision should involve consideration not only of the weapon system's probable military effectiveness, technological feasibility, and budgetary impact, but also its political effects. All the ramifications, both domestic and international, of a decision for NMD should be determined and evaluated as comprehensively as possible. This thesis seeks to inform NMD decision-making by examining U.S. NMD policy in terms of its political effects upon one of several critical bilateral relationships, namely Russia and the United States. Therefore, three aims are pursued herein: to illuminate Russian concerns and responses to U.S. NMD development to date; to suggest possible options Russia might pursue in response to U.S. deployment of such a system; and finally, to assess U.S. policy options in light of expected Russian behavior.

A review of Russian strategic culture, as well as of the public discourse of Russian policy-makers, strategy experts, and journalists provides a framework to evaluate Russian policy regarding U.S. NMD. Russia's perspectives appear to be a product of its security concerns, desire for national prestige, and sense of pragmatism. Russia's responses to date—attempts to influence international opinion and the policies of foreign governments against U.S. NMD—reflect these concerns and the limits of Russia's economic and military power. Identifying and understanding Russian vital interests, though not a simple matter, may offer the best solution to avoiding unintended consequences of U.S. NMD deployment.

Russia's apparent strategy is threefold: to engage in sharp rhetoric with the United States about NMD, while not crossing the line of an embarrassing showdown; to capitalize on America's unwillingness to assert its predominance in world affairs; and to persuade the West to subsidize the Russian economy in order to allay its own fears of instability in Russia. Moscow has at its disposal both military and diplomatic options to achieve its interests. However, the military options are severely affected by budgetary constraints.

The key diplomatic options hinge on the ABM Treaty. Russia has the option to negotiate amendments to the ABM Treaty as requested by the United States and thereby legitimize U.S. NMD under the treaty or to refuse such modifications, in which case Washington may exercise its legal option to withdraw from the treaty. If Russia chooses not to accommodate the American request, it would glean the political capital of standing up to the United States, generate the highest political price for the United States, and obtain limited justification for throwing off burdensome arms control requirements. This might mean putting multiple warheads on ICBMs or transferring arms and technology to states selected with a view to deepening America's strategic difficulties. However, Russia would forfeit further influence over U.S. NMD development, would likely lose much of the U.S. aid it currently receives, and most importantly would stand to lose its most powerful leverage to maintain parity in nuclear arsenals with the United States.

If Russia agreed to accept amendments in the ABM Treaty to allow the United States to build a limited missile defense, it would stand to make several important gains. Russia would maintain a control mechanism to affect the scope of U.S. NMD; it would have increased capacity to bargain for reductions in U.S. strategic nuclear stockpiles; and it would maintain favorable conditions to receive Western aid and investment. The dominant disadvantage to a decision to accept modifications in the

treaty would be a potential loss of face both at home and abroad. Russians fear that the United States might gain a “break out” capability strategically—that is, once the NMD infrastructure is established, an increase in radars, interceptor missiles, and associated capabilities would be hypothetically feasible.

In either case, Russia will seek to charge America a high political price for pursuing NMD. Russia’s nuclear arsenal and potential for political upheaval suggest that it is in the U.S. interest to promote stability in Russia, while considering how to redefine its strategic nuclear relationship with Russia.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Clinton administration has stated that it will make a decision in June 2000 as to whether the United States will proceed with deployment of a limited National Missile Defense (NMD) system. Secretary of Defense William Cohen made this announcement in January 1999, indicating that the Department of Defense has made “four critical decisions” regarding an NMD program.¹ These decisions include budgeting funds, affirming that a threat exists, acknowledging the need and intent to modify the ABM Treaty, and defining the phases of key technological decisions. With the exception of seeking amendments to the ABM Treaty, the statement implied that the issue was a straightforward technical decision—that is, will the system be technologically and economically capable of countering the intended threat? In reality, many issues are at stake. NMD is a strategic capability that has the potential to affect the nuclear weapon postures of powers other than the United States, as well as the general U.S. objective of promoting the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and associated delivery systems. Military decisions are not made in a vacuum. Each decision involves consideration not only of a weapon system’s probable military effectiveness, technological feasibility, and economic impact, but also its political impact. The decision about deploying NMD is fraught with domestic and international political implications. All the ramifications of a decision for NMD should be determined and evaluated as comprehensively as possible.

The international aspects of the decision should be examined in their component parts—bilateral relations between the United States and specific foreign powers—as well as in the

¹ William S. Cohen, DoD News Briefing, 20 January 1999. Available [Online] <http://www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint> (22 September 1999).

aggregate. Of particular interest are the concerns of the P-5 countries, the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, as their nuclear deterrents are potentially affected by NMD systems. This thesis examines U.S. NMD policy in terms of its political effects upon one of those bilateral relationships, namely Russia and the United States.

The focus on U.S.-Russian relations stems from Russia's strategic parity in the realm of nuclear weapons. For U.S. interests, Russia is the crucial case in the near term. It is the chief successor state to the USSR and America's fellow party to the ABM Treaty;² it is the guardian of the world's largest nuclear stockpile; and it alone has the potential to hold at risk U.S. national survival. Russia is also a state in transition, with an uncertain and unpredictable future. Any U.S. decision that could be perceived as provocative is worthy of careful examination. This thesis therefore has three aims: to illuminate Russian concerns and responses to U.S. NMD development to date; to suggest possible options Russia might pursue in response to U.S. deployment of such a system; and finally, to assess U.S. policy options in light of expected Russian behavior.

Systems that are technologically risky, very expensive, and potentially destabilizing attract sizeable political interest. NMD is such a system and NMD-related decision-making should be well-informed. This thesis seeks to contribute meaningfully to that body of knowledge, offering insights from the Russian political and strategic perspective. As more than one European observer has pointed out, the United States, with its unrivaled position in international influence, tends to proceed with military and technological advances in a naively pragmatic manner—that is, plugging away at NMD as if the only constraint consisted of the technological and financial hurdles. The principal concerns should be not only cost and feasibility, but also effects on nuclear

² The September 1997 agreements that would make Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine also parties to the ABM Treaty have not yet been ratified by the United States and Russia.

weapon agreements, treaties, and non-proliferation. Another concern is the potential impact on the strategic balance between Russia and the United States.

The subject is examined in two ways: first, by providing a concise analysis of the voluminous data on Russian responses to U.S. NMD; and second, by suggesting U.S. policy options that are appropriate in light of the analysis. The viewpoints of U.S. political, diplomatic, and technical experts are juxtaposed to the positions of their Russian counterparts. The analysis is based on a qualitative survey of the relevant literature, drawing on scholarly and journalistic sources as well as primary materials—that is, official U.S. and Russian statements of policy.

The thesis is organized in four parts: an introduction, including definitions and a brief description of ballistic missile defense technology; a presentation of Russian concerns; a discussion of Russian responses and options; and lastly, an assessment of U.S. policy options.

Prerequisite to examining Russian concerns regarding U.S. NMD policy is an understanding of what is involved in that defense. With no pretense to capture fully the technical nuances of NMD, the following subjects are addressed in brief to serve as a basis for a discussion of policy: a definition of ballistic missile defenses (BMD), the commonly accepted categorizations of BMD, and a discussion of applicable strategy.

A. BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE

Ballistic missile defense is the general term for all efforts to intercept any post-launch ballistic missile. The Ballistic Missile Defense Organization (BMDO) is tasked by the Department of Defense with managing U.S. efforts in BMD. The Secretary of Defense in 1993 charged BMDO with three objectives: first, to develop and deploy an increasingly capable Theater Missile Defense (TMD) to meet the existing missile threat to deployed U.S. and allied forces; second, as a

hedge against the emergence of long-range ballistic missile threats, to develop options to deploy a National Missile Defense system to protect the fifty states; and third, to continue to support research on more advanced ballistic missile defense technologies to keep pace with the threat and improve the performance of theater and national missile defense systems.³ The categorization of NMD is therefore considered an anti-ballistic missile system designed to protect the U.S. homeland. It follows that any system designed to protect deployed U.S. forces or their allies is considered TMD or area defense. The distinction between NMD and TMD consists of the scale of the system, the velocity and range capabilities, and most importantly for this discussion, the objective of the system. The definition is blurred, however, by the dual use capability of advanced TMD systems—an issue not lost on the Russians. The impending decision (June 2000) on NMD deployment announced in January 1999 represents a significant development in U.S. policy.

B. RUSSIAN CONCERNS

Yuri Chkanikov and Andrei Shoumikhin suggest that in Russia there exist two paradigms for the strategic nuclear relationship with the United States.⁴ The first is the *traditional* paradigm; it holds that the only acceptable basis for a stable strategic relationship between the powers is mutual vulnerability. Thus, an increase in strategic defense must be offset by an increase in, or a decision to not decrease, offensive nuclear weapons. The *reduced threat* paradigm suggests that the threat from the United States has declined because of a reduction in America's motivation to attack Russia, not in its capability to do so. Under this second paradigm, the military balance of

³ "History of the Ballistic Missile Defense Organization," *BMDO Fact Sheet SR-99-01*, April 1999. Available [Online] <http://www.acq.osd.mil/bmdo/bmdolink/html/factsheet.html> (18 September 1999).

⁴ Yuri Chkanikov and Andrei Shoumikhin, "Russian Security Requirements and the U.S. Limited National Missile Defense System: Is Accommodation Possible?" *Comparative Strategy* 17 (July-September 1998), 291-307.

power is consciously allowed to shift because it is economically either prudent or necessary, or because it is strategically unavoidable.

Both schools of thought oppose U.S. NMD for similar reasons. Russian resistance to U.S. NMD appears to be animated by fear of losing international status and becoming strategically vulnerable. The diminishing prestige of the Russian Federation is maintained only by the respect commanded by a powerful nuclear arsenal. The prospect of that power being diminished by a U.S. defense system threatens to relegate Russia to Third World status, commensurate with its economic position. While Russia has a GDP slightly larger than that of South Korea, Russia's population is over three times that of South Korea. This means that the purchasing power and GDP per inhabitant of Russia is at best less than one-third that per inhabitant of South Korea.⁵

Russians are concerned about the prospect of asymmetrical strategic vulnerability for straightforward reasons. The traditionalist fears domination by an invulnerable adversary. The more pragmatic adherents to the "reduced threat" paradigm fear increased strategic vulnerability not so much in relation to the United States, but rather with regard to states (such as Japan) on the periphery of the Russian Federation. Some Russians fear that such states might be emboldened by their relationship with the United States, especially if U.S. BMD technology is transferred to U.S. allies and security partners. The increased reliance on nuclear deterrent forces—a keystone of Russian security doctrine due to the country's economic woes—heightens the effect of NMD.

⁵ Olga Alexandrova and others, *Russia's Perspectives: Critical Factors and Potential Developments up to 2010* (Cologne: Bundesinstitut für Ostwissenschaftliche und Internationale Studien, 1999), 9.

The U.S. pursuit of NMD, though said to be designed only to counter missiles launched by "rogue nations," is perceived as threatening to Russia. The limited nature of the proposed U.S. NMD system is unconvincing to many Russians because of the perceived potential for expansion. In fact, the TMD concessions, won in the Demarcation Agreements of September 1997, are deemed to be building blocks for NMD in some Russian analyses.

C. POSSIBLE RUSSIAN RESPONSES

Russian responses have included a host of public diplomacy activities. The campaign to isolate the United States by labeling it hypocritical and reckless regarding non-proliferation and strategic stability has been robust. The Zapad 99 military exercise in June 1999 and the November 1999 ABM test serve as evidence that the Russians wish to signal that Moscow also has military options.

The Russian leadership could pursue numerous options if the United States deployed an NMD system. The diplomatic options include an intensification of the current responses, and possibly withdrawal from (or non-ratification of) various arms control treaties. The unsettled nature of Russia's political situation, in conjunction with a potent catalyst—perhaps U.S. NMD in conjunction with related developments in U.S. or NATO policy—could result in major shifts or upheavals in Russian policy. The military options can be generally grouped into four categories, namely: offensive force structure; promotion of proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction; defensive force structure, particularly BMD; and possible formation of anti-American military coalitions or alliances. The options that Russia pursues may also be affected by the March 2000 presidential election.

D. ASSESSMENT OF U.S. POLICY OPTIONS

The United States must make its decisions regarding NMD in light of the implications such defenses pose for Russia, a state with a powerful nuclear arsenal and dangerous instability. The United States is faced with ballistic missile threats, but the weight given them among the plethora of other threats must be carefully considered. The technological solution to the problem points toward ballistic missile defense. Yet, that solution could have dramatic side effects—political and strategic—that must be considered.

The United States is obligated by treaty and by its position of international leadership to pursue non-proliferation and nuclear arms reductions. Can it then pursue a program that many consider to be detrimental to those objectives? The Russians, as well as other foreign nations, will call on the United States to justify its policies. How the United States chooses to respond to such inquiries is a matter of politics and strategy.

It is unwise to think that Russia will remain weak permanently. While that might turn out to be the case, the policymaker should be careful to assess the motivations and advantages of the non-status quo power. Some analysts argue that there are distinct advantages and incentives to the Russian military position: low operational tempo, a general staff, little money, and few commitments abroad. That is, the Russians are obliged to be imaginative if they wish to make progress despite these constraints. The Russian military is motivated by the fact that it has lost its last few wars (Afghanistan, 1978-1988; and Chechnya, 1994-1996; to say nothing of the Cold War), that it has seemingly been betrayed by the political establishment, and that it has apparent and focused strategic threats. The United States military in contrast confronts an antithetical set of circumstances, which could be seen as disadvantages to the extent that they lead to

complacency and dissipation. This reminder in no way minimizes the pervasiveness and deep-rooted nature of Russia's troubles. It merely cautions that such conditions usually find solutions in the long term.

The ABM Treaty stands as the cornerstone to the debate about prospective U.S. NMD deployment decisions. Policy options can be grouped in terms of the political treatment of the ABM Treaty. Dean Wilkening has suggested three options using this metric: retaining the ABM Treaty without modification; amending the ABM Treaty as needed to keep pace with technology and security needs; and, finally, U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty.⁶ This framework will be employed to examine U.S. policy options.

⁶ Dean Wilkening, *The International Impact of U.S. National Missile Defenses* (Stanford, CA: Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, 1999). Available [Online] <http://cns.miis.edu/research/mnsg/nmd.pdf> (11 December 1999).

II. RUSSIAN CONCERNS REGARDING U.S. NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENSE

As the U.S. Congress and executive debate the merits of deploying an NMD system, the technological and fiscal issues should not overshadow the political and strategic ones. Well-informed decision-making requires that all concerns be examined and given appropriate weight. Such prescient decision-making regarding U.S. NMD will require an understanding of Russian concerns and responses, and the creation of well-informed policy that serves U.S. interests both in the short and long term. Like most things in the international arena, the true Russian concerns are veiled in the rhetoric of politics. Identifying and understanding Russian vital interests, though not a simple matter, may offer the best solution to avoiding unintended consequences. Winston Churchill's words convey the enduring nature of this problem yet also suggest a solution: "I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest."¹ An understanding of Russia's national interests may therefore suggest Moscow's probable courses of action and narrow the range of plausible futures.

The Russian resistance to U.S. NMD stems from three primary concerns. The first area of concern is national security as it relates to regional and global threats, both real and perceived. The second is national prestige, a powerful issue in a nation still suffering from the loss of its superpower status. The last determining concern is pragmatism—how the Russian leadership can maximize international influence while grappling with domestic reform in a state troubled at the

¹ Winston S. Churchill. *The Gathering Storm: The Second World War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), 449.

foundational level. These areas are interrelated and jointly they constitute the key elements of Russian national strategy and thus foreign policy.

A. SECURITY

Russia's perception of national security and its response to U.S. NMD cannot be understood apart from the dominant Russian strategic mind set, which is shaped by history and geography. In keeping with the communist model, notwithstanding its ideological tenet that the proletarian revolution would eventually result in the state "withering" away, Soviet military power became the regime's hallmark and totalitarian control its *modus operandi*. The Soviet Union found building military might and countering external security threats to be a source of purpose and great pride. The civil war that followed in the wake of the October Revolution mandated a military focus for the new regime. The Bolsheviks, ascendant through military means, found military production a well-suited output of the industrialization that their ideology extolled. Industrialization was to be the force that would rid Russia of the technological backwardness. In February 1931, Stalin passionately conveyed his feelings in this regard in discussing the USSR's first Five Year Plan:

No, we refuse to be beaten! One feature of the history of old Russia was the continual beatings she suffered for falling behind, for her backwardness.... That is why we must no longer lag behind... We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it, or they crush us.²

That industrialization, so well-suited to building a massive military apparatus, led to that apparatus becoming a defining characteristic of the Soviet Union. "Industrialization" of

² Joseph Stalin, *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947), 356, cited in Michael Nacht, *The Age of Vulnerability: Threats to the Nuclear Stalemate* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 1985), 23.

agriculture under Stalin was a dismal failure and an unparalleled atrocity, but industrialization of manufactured goods provided the USSR a means to be victorious in the Second World War—the principal legitimizing achievement of the communist regime.

Russian history and culture differ greatly, even fundamentally, from those of the United States. Russia has been plagued by invasion and foreign domination throughout the past millennium. Its borders have never been secure; rather they have been the source of a constant sense of vulnerability. Defensive strategy has played a significant role in its security. Russia has had to repeatedly fall back on its vast territory and rely on time to thwart the advances of its adversaries. The United States, in contrast, has enjoyed the luxury of secure borders and freedom from invasion. Its strategic culture includes a general sense of safety, not vulnerability. Americans, in Colin S. Gray's words on strategic culture, have believed that they "could achieve anything to which they set their hands in earnest."³ The United States has favored the conduct of offensive operations in warfare and has relied on mass production and superior technology to overcome its opponents. The United States has achieved, with few exceptions, victory in its military engagements. The outcomes of Russia's wars have been a mixture of victories and defeats, and rarely have the successes been decisive or enduring. This historical and cultural background shapes the current strategic mind set and is reflected in the national security doctrine of the Russian Federation.

1. Doctrine

In October 1999, the Russian Federation released a draft military doctrine, a revision of the previous doctrine published in 1993. This document provides useful insight into the thinking

³ Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press, 1986), 42.

of Russian strategists. Specifically, it demonstrates the persistence of many elements of traditional Russian security concerns. The sense of vulnerability along Russia's borders and the need to depend on military power to defend its interests are clearly evident. Yet, there are departures from Soviet doctrinal traditions. For example, the declaration that Russia desires to support a multipolar world "based on the equal rights of peoples and nations"⁴ is a clear indication that the Russian Federation considers the bipolar world dead, and a unipolar one unacceptable given that it is not the sole superpower.

The doctrine states that it is designed for "the transition period, the period of establishment of democratic statehood and of a multistructured economy, of reorganization of the Russian Federation military organization and of a dynamic transformation of the system of international relations."⁵ The doctrine declares that Russia's policy is "strictly defensive;" yet, it is designed to counter a negative trend and support a positive one. The first trend is toward the establishment of a "unipolar world based on the domination of one superpower and on the use of military force to resolve key problems of world policy."⁶ The second is the trend toward "forming a multipolar world based on... consideration for and assurance of a balance of the national interests of states, and on implementation of fundamental rules of international law."⁷ The message is quite clear. Russia sees U.S. dominance as fundamentally threatening to its interests, especially the U.S. willingness to use force to resolve problems, presumably referring to U.S.-led

⁴ Russian Ministry of Defense draft Military Doctrine. *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 9 October 1999, 3.

⁵ Ibid., 3-4.

⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

⁷ Ibid., 3-4.

military interventions affecting Iraq and Kosovo—operations to which Russia did not lend its approval or support.⁸

It is significant with regard to NMD and specifically the ABM Treaty that the doctrine embraces fully “the rule of law.” In doing so, Russia is attempting to seize the moral high ground from the United States—even though holding that position is an important element of U.S. strategic culture.⁹ Presumably, the intent is to promote Russia’s own interests by increasing the political costs of any U.S. decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty. Although the United States has a legal right to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, the Russians would like to appeal to Americans who feel uncomfortable about exercising this right—as if the withdrawal would somehow undermine international law.

Russia’s doctrine focuses its military forces against internal and external threats. On the one hand, it describes the threat of internal dissension resulting from ethnic or religious extremist groups. The current conflict in Chechnya typifies this threat. On the other hand, the doctrine addresses two external threats: potential regional conflicts along Russia’s borders, and the threat of U.S. intervention in its perceived sphere of influence. The doctrine asserts the maintenance of a strong nuclear deterrent as the key to Russia’s strategy to counter pervasive U.S. influence and also to control escalation of regional conflict.

Analysis of the doctrine is instructive for understanding the Russian response to U.S. NMD proposals. The external threats in Russia’s perspective are the current and probable clashes along its border among the newly independent states, and the dominance of U.S. power in world

⁸ Since June 1999, however, Russia has contributed forces to the UN Security Council-authorized, NATO-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo.

⁹ Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style*, 42.

politics. Though Russia's doctrine expressly states the goal of eventual elimination of nuclear weapons (a goal to which all parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty are legally committed), the doctrine also holds that nuclear weapons have deterrence and operational utility.¹⁰ "Many Russian military authors have discussed limited-use options for purposes such as averting defeat, stabilizing the line held by Russian forces, 'de-escalating' military conflict, and preventing a geographical extension of fighting."¹¹ Thus, any threat to the credibility of Russia's nuclear deterrent, like NMD (or TMD along its borders), will be perceived as inherently threatening to its national security. This analysis is reinforced by specific statements within the doctrine calling for the "preservation and strengthening of the 1972 ABM Treaty,"¹² and referring to "the need to possess a nuclear deterrent capable of ensuring, on a guaranteed basis, infliction of intended damage on any aggressor state or coalition of states under any conditions."¹³

Russia's nuclear strategy is confronted not only with U.S. NMD, but also with the diminution of its nuclear forces, whether by arms reduction agreements or economic constraints. Insufficient fiscal resources have forced Russia to reduce both conventional and nuclear forces. The doctrine reflects a strategy for coping with both of these undesirable circumstances. The reduction in conventional arms will be offset by nuclear weapons. This is a shift from the 1993 doctrine. Nikolai Sokov has succinctly captured the significance of the expanded role of nuclear weapons:

¹⁰ Russian Ministry of Defense draft Military Doctrine, 12, 16.

¹¹ David Yost, *The U.S. and Nuclear Deterrence in Europe*, Adelphi Paper 326 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, March 1999), 16. Yost provides references to several Russian sources on this point.

¹² Russian Ministry of Defense draft Military Doctrine, 7.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 3-4, 12.

The 1999 language introduces two important innovations. First, it allows for the use of nuclear weapons in response to other weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical weapons (the provision is similar to the one adopted earlier by the United States). Second, nuclear weapons can now be used against any country or coalition—not necessarily one that includes a nuclear state—if the situation is critical to Russian national security. The doctrine does not specify what is considered a critical situation, but common sense suggests that it means a situation when the integrity and sovereignty of the country is at stake. Among other things, this new provision hints at the state of the conventional armed forces: they are no longer considered *a priori* capable of coping with non-nuclear states.¹⁴

In this “transitional period” nuclear weapons options will be considered in more diverse scenarios. At the same time nuclear arms reductions are still expected to continue. START II and III are likely to codify reductions caused by economic realities. The reductions in nuclear weapons will be offset by diplomatic efforts—an attempt to maintain parity with the United States as the only legitimate metric for Russia’s nuclear arsenal. In an environment in which Russia faces both greater reliance on nuclear weapons and at the same time a declining inventory, it must maximize the utility of each weapon.¹⁵ This implies that any attrition an ABM system could hypothetically achieve would have a proportionally greater impact on Russia’s strategic deterrent as its weapons stockpiles decline. Russian security is perceived to hinge on maintaining a nuclear deterrent to counter regional and global threats; anything that reduces the perceived effectiveness of that deterrent will be considered a detriment. The national security calculus must address not only force employment, but also the accuracy of the threat assessment; differences of opinion within Russia regarding global threats may well affect Russian responses to U.S. NMD.

¹⁴ Nikolai Sokov, *Overview: An Assessment of the Draft Military Doctrine* (Monterey, CA: Center for Non-Proliferation Studies, 1999). Available [Online] <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/reports/sokov.htm> (11 December 1999).

¹⁵ It bears noting that a shift in targeting objectives may be a consequence of a reduction in the number of strategic nuclear weapons. It can be assumed that at some point counterforce targeting will be abandoned and that countervalue targets will be pursued because of the scarcity of weapons. This reality applies to both parties.

2. Traditionalists and Moderates

The gamut of political opinion within Russia includes traditionalists and moderates. Yuri Chkanikov and Andrei Shoumikhin suggest two paradigms: one *traditionalist*, and the other perceiving a *reduced threat*. The adherents to the former retain a perspective carried over from the Cold War—that the United States is the principal threat, and that mutually assured destruction is the necessary strategy. In light of that, parity of nuclear weapons between the nations is critical. Traditionalists see U.S. NMD as an agent that would disturb the balance; therefore, Russia would require an increased nuclear weapon posture. The *reduced threat* paradigm is subscribed to by moderates, who take the view that Russia must consider its domestic matters as a more proximate threat.¹⁶ Moderates acknowledge that Russia's power has declined and that its need for Western aid has increased—facts that should be obvious to both schools of thought. However, the moderates also oppose U.S. NMD because it may embolden the United States and leaves open the possibility of expansion of a “thin defense” subject only to technology, not Russian opinion and treaties. The possibility that U.S. NMD technology could be proliferated around Russia's borders arouses concerns for both paradigms.

Chkanikov and Shoumikhin suggested in 1998 that there was a “mellowing” in the Russian view of international affairs stemming from a lack of power and the overriding concerns of domestic issues.¹⁷ They cited the response of Russia to NATO expansion as evidence that rhetoric and attitudes have become more moderate in light of the fact that Russia could do little to prevent the expansion. If one labels something a terrible threat, yet can do nothing to counter it,

¹⁶ Yuri Chkanikov and Andrei Shoumikhin, “Russian Security Requirements and the U.S. Limited National Missile Defense System: Is Accommodation Possible?” *Comparative Strategy* 17 (July-September 1998), 291-92.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 291.

one has only succeeded in declaring one's own weakness. They suggested the possibility that Russia might accept a limited U.S. NMD system if it was negotiated in an appropriate manner—that is, if Russia was treated as an “equal in the military-strategic area....[and if Russia received] symbolic and practical concessions or rewards” for complaisance.¹⁸

Experiences in 1999 reversed that “mellowing” trend—at least temporarily. Four events factor in this shift: the U.S. NMD announcement in January 1999; the U.S.-led NATO use of force in the Kosovo crisis in March-June 1999; Russia's Chechnya campaign since September 1999; and the Russian Duma elections in December 1999. The U.S. decision to fund a robust BMD effort, including NMD, was announced by Secretary of Defense William Cohen in January 1999. This decision, in conjunction with the successful tests of critical technologies for BMD, has predictably elicited an impassioned response from Russia. A deep-seated sense of vulnerability has been aroused within traditionalists and moderates. Allegations of aggressive U.S. intent have begun to resonate with the Russian population.

Kosovo has also been a factor in the hardening of Russian opinion and distrust of the West. Russian officials and experts have argued that NATO's use of military force to resolve a conflict within a sovereign country was against the rule of international law, because it lacked the benefit of an explicit UN Security Council authorization. NATO's intervention in Kosovo touched a raw nerve in Russia and other nations, including China. NATO's military intervention, justified by the need to avert a Western-defined “humanitarian crisis,” was invariably interpreted by Russians as threatening to the sovereignty of weaker states. Russia's inability to respond with anything more powerful than rhetoric heightened fears among the elite. According to a Chinese

¹⁸ Ibid., 300-302.

assessment, Russia's strategy regarding Kosovo moved, as a matter of necessity, from hardline opposition to participation in the peace keeping effort. "On the one hand, the government adopted a series of hardline postures in order to stabilize Russian feelings, and at the same time it considered that Russia lacked the economic strength to take part in any large-scale military action [to counter the West]."¹⁹ Russia's pragmatic response, including Moscow's July 1999 decision to resume discussions in the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council about Kosovo, does not belie the sense of threat felt in Russian society.

The crisis in Chechnya has also served to stiffen the Russian attitude against the West. Russia's use of force rallies popular support because it demonstrates that Russia can take care of an internal problem and can do so in defiance of criticism from the United States and Western Europe. Demonstrating the capability to provide for security (internal and external) is a fundamental concern of any state—especially one with impending elections.

The harsh rhetoric of the Russian leadership has been quite predictable in light of both the Duma and presidential elections, the former in December 1999 and the latter in March 2000. The immensely popular military campaign in Chechnya is one of the few successes that the leadership can claim. Politicians have longed for something to draw attention away from the enduring domestic woes. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's statement in the *Times* of London is laced with national political appeal. Capitalizing on recent military success, he states, "To win a victory over terrorism in Chechnya is vital, just as we must, and will triumph over organized crime."²⁰ How

¹⁹ Lin Guiling, "Russia Readjusts Strategy in Face of Reality," *Renmin Ribao*, 2 July 1999. Translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, entitled "Renmin Ribao Views Russian Strategy Change," 3 July 1999 (FBIS-FTS19990703000212).

²⁰ Vladimir Putin, "Why We Are Fighting in Chechnya," *Times* (London), 3 December 1999.

endemic corruption and the unstable economy will be remedied is not addressed, nor is the question, why have the same actors made so little progress on the domestic front thus far? Russia needs a rallying point, and its politicians intend to glean as much capital as possible from this surge of nationalism.

Traditionalists and moderates alike must define and defend against national security threats. The trend toward a "reduced threat" perspective of the United States will likely continue, though not without a predictable ebb and flow. It is probable that this paradigm is best suited to Russia's condition and future aspirations. Nonetheless, U.S. NMD is perceived by both traditionalists and moderates as a threat because, they fear, it may allow the balance of strategic power to be shifted by unilateral action. Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen addressed the Russian concern in his January 20, 1999 announcement. "The limited NMD capability we're developing is focused primarily on countering rogue nation threats and will not be capable of countering Russia's nuclear deterrent."²¹ Russia's suspicions are conveyed by Chkanikov and Shoumikhin. "The Americans are hiding their true intentions, that is, the desire to obtain global superiority and 'invincibility,' by pretending that the NMD system is exclusively intended to deal with the threat of the so-called Third World rogues."²² They leave little doubt that many Russian observers believe that declared U.S. intentions regarding NMD are merely a subterfuge.

B. PRESTIGE

Both moderates and traditionalists have concerns regarding the security of the Russian Federation, yet each school of thought prioritizes the threats differently. In both camps, the

²¹ William S. Cohen, DoD News Briefing, 20 January 1999. Available [Online] <http://www.defenselink.mil/cgi-bin/dlprint> (18 September 1999).

²² Yuri Chkanikov and Andrei Shoumikhin, "Russian Security Requirements," 293.

influence of national prestige is evident. The concepts of security and prestige are intertwined and have a profound impact on foreign policy. Understanding the public sense of prestige requires historical perspective.

Despite the negative aspects of Soviet rule—including political repression, economic backwardness, and failed attempts to blend the state and society—Soviet military might emerged as the mechanism that defeated and deterred external security threats, established a buffer region on the USSR's borders, and gave the USSR some sense of international clout. The advent of Soviet nuclear weapons, in 1949, cemented these elements in cultural identity and public esteem. The regime would find little to legitimize itself in its social or economic achievements, but military preeminence was an attainable goal. This, in conjunction with their enduring sense of vulnerability, may account for the disproportionate percentage of GDP Soviet leaders—with the exceptions of Khrushchev and Gorbachev²³—devoted to building the military-industrial complex. Military power was deemed necessary for regime survival, national security, and international prestige. Military power remains the principal defining element of Russian state power.

Unfortunately for the Soviets, their defining element became the cause of their demise. The collapse of the USSR was the product of many forces, but prominent factors included disproportionate expenditures on defense and the manipulation of the economy to provide for military production. The weight of the apparatus caused it to collapse on itself with multifarious effects. Nonetheless, military power has had an enduring influence on Russian culture. The characters in Anatole France's historical satire *Penguin Island* discuss metaphorically why the French idolize Napoleon, a man who had in the end accomplished so little of enduring value and

²³ Harry Eckstein and others, *Can Democracy Take Root in Post-Soviet Russia? Explorations in State-Society Relations* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing, 1998), 335.

had cost the society so many lives; one character retorts confidently, "But he gave us glory."²⁴ In much the same way, Soviet military might gave grandeur to a people largely deprived of glory. The Soviets commanded the attention of the world for decades through military power, and it remains one of the main reasons (particularly nuclear forces) why Russia commands respect and attention today.

The rapid decline of the Soviet Union was not the result of defeat in decisive battles. This reality gives rise to two issues. First, the governing establishment was not removed, and a new one raised in its place. In fact, many of the same actors and centers of power remained, though they ostensibly adopted new democratic structures. The lack of revolution and its inherent renovation of the leadership left a cadre of politicians in place that had known the USSR's imperial greatness, but were now deprived of it. The sense of loss of great power status has resulted in some of the convulsions that typify the demise of other European empires. The authoritarian nature of the Russian presidency and many of President Yeltsin's machinations can also be attributed to the fact that a fundamental democratic transformation has not taken place. Lilia Shevtsova, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, makes the following observation.

[Russia's] leadership is produced by elections, but the leader's rule is highly personal and arbitrary, without legal constraints. The ruling elite is drawn from among family members, friends of the family, or groups that anticipate some reward... and citizen participation in the decision-making process is minimal.²⁵

²⁴ Anatole France. *Penguin Island* (New York: The Modern Library, 1933), 125.

²⁵ Lilia Shevtsova, *Yeltsin's Russia: Myths and Reality* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), 288-289.

The resultant fears of being marginalized or ignored are intense and account for much political activity. The newly released draft military doctrine reflects this concern in that it strongly supports the development of a "multipolar world"—a goal that is a distant second place to the USSR's objective of leading the worldwide socialist revolution to abolish competing forms of government.

The October 1999 draft military doctrine reveals another glimpse into the mind set of the Russian leadership. In its delineation of external threats, the doctrine lists "*to ignore (or infringe on) Russian Federation interests in resolving international security problems and to oppose strengthening [of the Russian Federation] as one of the influential centers of a multipolar world.*"²⁶ These are certainly not the words of the strong. That a nation is a threat if it ignores or opposes strengthening the Russian Federation is an intriguing, if not ironic, statement. Clearly the Russians are profoundly afraid of simply being ignored, or worse, usurped.

It is not surprising that the Russian leadership would feel a sense of loss. Russia has slipped drastically in terms of international power. The gross domestic product of the Russian economy is smaller than that of Mexico;²⁷ and demographers predict a continuing decline in the population's health and numbers.²⁸ Russia is only separated from Third World status by virtue of its military, especially its strategic rocket forces. According to a German study group,

²⁶ Russian Ministry of Defense draft Military Doctrine, 4; emphasis added.

²⁷ Olga Alexandrova and others. *Russia's Perspectives: Critical Factors and Potential Developments up to 2010* (Cologne: Bundesinstitut für Ostwissenschaftliche und Internationale Studien, 1999), 9. The comparison is based on 1997 gross domestic product figures, according to World Bank indicators.

²⁸ Murray Feshbach. "A Sick and Shrinking Nation." *Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, 1 November 1999, 26.

The size of the army and the nuclear potential continue to be the only factors that qualify Russia as one of the poles in the self-postulated 'multi-polar world.' A reduction of the armed forces will automatically lead to a reduction in Russian influence in foreign and security policy—the last remaining status symbols.²⁹

Russia's power today rests primarily in its military might, especially its nuclear weapons.

The Russian situation is disturbing, moreover, because mechanisms for orderly and peaceful change are absent. Russia lacks the economy, mature governmental structures, and rule of law to recover in the near term. The prognosis for recovery is poor in the long term as well, if changes in the political system are not effected. William Odom submits that Russia is not a major power; rather it is a weak state that avoids reform because the United States allows it to maintain the illusion that it is a first-rate power. "Russia simply is not on the path to liberal democracy or to an effective market economy. Periodic assertions that the Russian economy is 'is on the mend' or that 'progress toward democracy' may be slow but is continuing, or that 'polarized politics' is a thing of the past are simply misleading."³⁰ Support of grand illusions in Russia may not be beneficial; however, Western support of Russia for consolidation and reform of the political and economic spheres is probably indispensable.

The second major issue associated with the nonviolent collapse of the Soviet Union is that the military has been weakened but not disbanded. In fact, in the Russian case, the military is restless, underpaid, and overmanned. The first Chechnya war, 1994-1996, left the military humiliated, and feeling betrayed by the civilian leadership. For a nation that depended so much on its military might, the loss of status is acute. Russia's current Chechen campaign is evidence of

²⁹ Olga Alexandrova and others, *Russia's Perspectives*, 32.

³⁰ William E. Odom, "Clinton 'Quids' Don't Produce Russian 'Quos,'" *Wall Street Journal*, 22 November 1999.

this. The character of that campaign and its effect on the political situation reveal foreboding symptoms of military ascendancy within the Russian Federation.

The Chechen war and economic improvements brought on by the rise in oil prices have created an upswing in Russian nationalism. The war is clearly the dominant factor. The violence of the campaign indicates the dominant role of the military leadership and a wholesale effort to avoid the humiliation of the previous war. General Anatoly Kvashnin, Chief of the Russian General Staff, also led the 1994-1996 war, blaming its bloody failures on political interference. This time Kvashnin has demanded complete freedom of action and guaranteed financial resources for the conduct of the campaign and rearmament. His support came at the behest of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who has emerged as the leading candidate for the March 2000 presidential elections. Putin's popularity has risen from near zero to fifty-eight percent.³¹ The importance of this campaign from the Russian perspective is revealed in the intensity of the military action. Mark Galeotti, director of the Organized Russian and Eurasian Crime Research Unit at Keele University in England, described the agreement between Prime Minister Putin and the Russian generals. "There was a commitment this time, the money would be paid. That was the first price. The second price was, we do it our way, we assemble [a] huge force, brutal tactics, pacification by depopulation."³²

Prime Minister Putin, the leading presidential candidate, has covered such bellicosity with eloquent overtures to the Western press. Having learned much from the conduct of NATO and

³¹ Ben Aris, "Military Finds Strength in Chechnya War," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, 24 November 1999; and Sharon LaFraniere, "Putin Makes Pact With Communists," *Washington Post*, 19 January 2000, 1.

³² Mark Galeotti, quoted in David Hoffman, "War Gives New Clout to Russian Military," *Washington Post*, 5 December 1999, 1.

Western leaders in the Kosovo conflict, Desert Storm, and anti-terrorism strikes, Putin has asserted that the Russian intervention in Chechnya is as noble, as carefully executed, and as essential as the Western response to terrorism. In Putin's words,

Our immediate aim is to rid Chechnya of those who threaten the safety of Chechens and Russians....when a society's core interests are besieged by violent elements, responsible leaders must respond. That is our purpose in Chechnya, and we are determined to see it through. The understanding of our friends abroad would be helpful.³³

However, potential loss of civilian control of the military and the prospective militarization of Russian society lie beneath the thin veneer of Putin's approach to the West. Many analysts have suggested that if the Russian politicians attempt to rein in the military, even because of international pressure, they will go unheeded by an increasingly powerful military leadership. Both General Kvashnin and General Vladimir Shamanov, a commander on the Chechen front, have made direct statements indicating the consequences of political interference with the pursuit of military objectives. Shamanov's statement, threatening his resignation if the politicians hinder the military, reveals the stalwart resistance to a repetition of the shame of the 1994-1996 Chechen war. "I would not serve in such an army, I would tear off my epaulets and look for a civilian job."³⁴ Nikolai Petrov, of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, commented on the overall effect of the Chechen campaign on the Russian populace. He stated, "If they [the Russians] win, then there is likely to be an increased militarization of society—an increased role for the military and more budget funds."³⁵ While Chechnya has provided an opportunity for

³³ Vladimir Putin. "Why We Must Act." *New York Times*, 14 November 1999.

³⁴ Nikolai Petrov, quoted in Ben Aris, "Military Finds Strength in Chechnya War."

³⁵ Ibid.

Putin, his success hinges on the outcome of the conflict and the long term effects. He is clearly riding the wave of nationalism at this point.

The Chechen campaign is the manifestation of elements of the strategic culture of Russia. The preoccupation with national prestige and the reliance on military power portend dangerous consequences in a nation with deep-seated economic and social problems. Further, these factors do nothing to facilitate the definition of solutions to Russia's problems. Making Russian prestige a function of military power contributes to a militarized society, at a time when experts suggest that Russia's only path to economic and social reform is through close cooperation with the West and the establishment of the rule of law.

This political, historical, and cultural setting illumines the Russian response to U.S. NMD. The U.S. defensive system is perceived as a strategic security threat to Russia, and as a major threat to national prestige. In Russian eyes, U.S. NMD may jeopardize the chief guarantee of Russian clout in the international arena, that of nuclear weapons. The reactions to a loss of prestige may be more desperate or less rational than those to a diminished strategic deterrent against the United States. The intemperate remarks of Russian President Yeltsin suggest that this is the case. During his December 1999 trip to China, Yeltsin berated the U.S. President: "It seems Mr. Clinton has forgotten Russia is a great power that possesses a nuclear arsenal. We aren't afraid at all of Clinton's anti-Russian position."³⁶ The unstable Russian situation is compounded by emotion and politics. In addition, even Russia's moderates oppose U.S. NMD policy—though more rationally and pragmatically than traditionalists.

³⁶ Boris Yeltsin, quoted in John Leicester, "Yeltsin Lashes Out at Clinton," Associated Press, 9 December 1999.

C. PRAGMATISM

The third area of Russian concern dealing with U.S. NMD is pragmatism. Russian politicians, especially the more moderate leaders, recognize the troubled state of domestic affairs and Russia's declining international influence. They seek therefore to maximize their objectives vis-à-vis the United States and its steady strides toward deploying NMD.

One of the foremost principles in Russia's political strategy is to maintain that strategic nuclear parity with the United States is the only reliable basis for strategic stability. It is an assumption that is not discussed or debated, merely assumed as being self-evident. No metrics of international power, save nuclear arms and natural resources and geography, place Russia among the key nations of the world. Russia's unfaltering assertion that U.S.-Russian strategic nuclear parity is essential to strategic stability worldwide is adroit diplomacy on the part of the weaker state.

In keeping with the parity strategy, Olga Ruban, a Russian analyst, has astutely suggested that the Russians demand a high price for allowing the United States to amend the ABM Treaty. If Russia tries to hold off the United States without granting any concessions, she suggests, the technology-minded U.S. government will simply withdraw from the ABM Treaty. Russia will have gained nothing and will have abandoned any hope of parity. Ruban proposes a fourfold "tariff" that Russia should charge the United States for concessions on NMD. First, Russia should seek strategic nuclear stockpiles of 1,200 to 1,500 warheads for both parties. Second, to counter NMD, Russia should be allowed MIRVed ICBMs. Third, the loopholes for a strategic reserve of backup weapons should be removed. Fourth, Russia should achieve guarantees that tactical nuclear weapons and even long-range non-nuclear weapons will be prohibited from

placement in border states.³⁷ Russia could thereby accomplish what it economically must pursue—the drawdown of its nuclear arsenal—and simultaneously force the United States to maintain parity with it for no compelling reason other than the U.S. wish to maintain the ABM Treaty, for domestic and international political purposes.

Ruban's suggestions represent *Realpolitik*, though Russian traditionalists may want to continue the harsh rhetoric. Thus far Russia's parity strategy has been successful. William Odom asserts that the Clinton administration appears to have no objection to the concept of parity:

[The] administration's approach can be summed up as a pair of quid pro quos. The Clinton "quids" assume that Russia is still a great power, and that the U.S. has a duty to encourage the IMF, the World Bank, and private-sector investors to provide large capital assistance. The "quos" include an expectation that Russia will make progress toward liberal democracy, while also playing a constructive international role. But the quids cannot possibly produce the quos, because they are based on illusions about Russian realities and possibilities.³⁸

Ruban's proposed strategy is understandable and adroit, in that it aims at maximizing international power and maintaining prestige through strategic deterrence to the greatest extent possible, given Russia's economic and social situation. Ruban's approach would also keep the U.S. NMD program limited by the ABM Treaty, albeit in revised form, giving Russia a continuing level of influence over possible future U.S. modifications in the NMD posture.

Another instance of pragmatism, and one unchallenged in the press, is that Russia vows to hold the United States responsible for all the international consequences of withdrawal from the ABM Treaty. Russian statesmen threaten that such disregard for a pivotal treaty would render

³⁷ Olga Ruban, "Shelter From Satan. Nuclear Weapons for Sale. Price Negotiable," *Moscow Moskovskiy Komsomolets*, 16 August 1999, 2. Translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, entitled "Russia Must Ask 'High Price' Over ABM Pact," 17 August 1999 (FBIS-FTS19990817000200).

³⁸ William E. Odom, "Clinton 'Quids' Don't Produce Russian 'Quos.'"

the entire body of arms control treaties and agreements impotent. A Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Vladimir Rakhmanin, commented as follows after the successful U.S. NMD test in October 1999: "Such actions by the U.S. side effectively lead to the undermining of key provisions of the [ABM] treaty, with all the negative consequences this is fraught with. Responsibility for this lies with the United States."³⁹ Yet, the Russians flagrantly violate the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) with their war against Chechnya. Commenting on the Russian forces massed in the Northern Caucasus, a Defense Ministry spokesman, Colonel Nikolai Shulgin, implied that the violations were necessary for military success: "It's sheer necessity for us to have a powerful force in Chechnya—it is well known from military textbooks that the attacker needs to outnumber the defender by at least five to one."⁴⁰ The Russians failed to ask the other CFE Treaty parties for their consent before violating the treaty, but Moscow has requested amendments to the treaty.

D. CONCLUSION

Russia's position on U.S. NMD is a product of its security concerns, desire for national prestige, and sense of pragmatism. Its responses to date and the options it may pursue are shaped by its concerns. Understanding the origins and thrust of these concerns is essential for informed U.S. policy decisions. The degree to which they are taken into account in that policy will affect the outcomes—even the unintended ones.

³⁹ Simon Saradzhyan, "Yeltsin, Parliament Blast U.S. Missile Defense Efforts," *Defense News*, 18 October 1999, 26.

⁴⁰ Nikolai Shulgin, quoted in Vladislav Komarov, "Russia Spurns Conventional Arms Treaty," *Russian Journal*, 15 November 1999. Available [Online] <http://www.russiajournal.com/start/defense/article.cgi?ind=1753> (9 December 1999).

Russia's difficulties are significant. It simultaneously faces the need to assert itself, to rebuild its economic and military strength, and to appeal for aid and investment. It is in a curious and troubling dilemma of grand proportions and horrific potential. It is desirous of international prestige and seeks to pursue it through military might, yet has developed "a precarious economic dependency on Western cooperation."⁴¹ It is trying to maintain international clout, yet is often deluded by past grandeur.

Sir Henry Tizard, an advisor to the British Ministry of Defense, spoke a powerful admonition to his countrymen regarding international relations. Though the situations of Britain in the late 1940's and Russia fifty years later are quite different, Tizard's point is still instructive:

We persist in regarding ourselves as a Great Power, capable of everything and only temporarily handicapped by economic difficulties. We are not a Great Power and never will be again. We are a great nation, but if we continue to behave like a Great Power we shall soon cease to be a great nation.⁴²

Prescient U.S. NMD policy must be sensitive to the uncertain and volatile Russian political terrain.

⁴¹ Olga Alexandrova and others, *Russia's Perspectives*, 7.

⁴² Henry Tizard, quoted in Margaret Gowing, *Independence and Deterrence: Britain and Atomic Energy 1945-52*, vol. 1. (London: Macmillan, 1974), 230, quoted in Hugo Young, *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1999), 24.

III. RUSSIAN RESPONSES AND OPTIONS

Russian concerns regarding U.S. NMD are based on multiple factors, including national security interests, a preoccupation with international prestige, and pragmatism. These concerns in turn shape the Russian responses to prospective U.S. NMD deployment. The Russian responses are addressed in this chapter in terms of three questions. What have the Russians done in the recent past to counter U.S. NMD development and progress toward deployment? What are they currently doing in this regard? What are their options to assert Russian national interests in the near to medium term? The answers to these questions should inform U.S. decision-making and help to define the courses of action available to the United States.

The options which Russia may choose are limited by economic, cultural, and political factors. While many factors influence U.S. national decision-making, one of the prime issues for U.S. NMD policy to consider is what effect NMD deployment might have on the international security environment and in particular on Russo-American relations. The state of the Russian economy is perhaps the dominant constraint on Russia's options in response to the proposed U.S. NMD deployment. Immediate Russian responses and future courses of action are limited by economic constraints. Russia can not afford to pursue hypothetical grand schemes. It lacks the economic wherewithal by almost any measure to compete with the United States. Thus, its responses and potential courses of action are by definition sub-optimal solutions in relation to Russian aspirations. However, the Russians have historically demonstrated a surprising ability to allocate resources to a desired end while enduring extreme austerity as a people.

A. RUSSIAN RESPONSES

Russia is, to repeat, limited in its ability to respond to U.S. NMD to an exceptional degree. All nations are constrained by finite resources in their responses to any situation, but Russia is constrained in a way that leaves it without peer in its plight. No country that pretends to such high international status and influence is as troubled internally as Russia. These troubles are not limited to its poor economic performance; they extend to public health, population growth rates, environmental damage, and moral issues, in particular the lack of a reliable rule of law.

Nicholas Eberstadt, of the Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies, has commented poignantly on the relationship between public health and great power status. "No industrialized country has ever before suffered such a severe and prolonged deterioration during peacetime." According to Eberstadt, "Such health trends augur ill for the Russian economy—and it is economic power that must ultimately underwrite any sustained resumption of international influence for Russia."¹ Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly Jr. find the ecological state of Russia to be another grave liability. "No other great industrial civilization so systematically and so long poisoned its land, air, water, and people."² René Nyberg has commented on the declining population—the effects of which are likely to exacerbate and prolong Russia's predicament—as follows: "Northern Russia and the Far East are swiftly depopulating. The Murmansk region, for instance, has already lost twenty percent of its population during this decade."³

¹ Nicholas Eberstadt, "Russia: Too Sick to Matter?" *Policy Review* 95 (June/July 1999), 2. Available [Online] <http://www.policyreview.com/jun99/eberstadt.html> (11 February 2000).

² Murray Feshbach and Alfred Friendly, Jr., *Ecocide in the USSR: Health and Nature Under Siege* (New York: Basic Books, 1992), 1.

³ René Nyberg, "Russia and Europe," *European Security* 8 (Summer 1999), 18.

Another issue that portends a protracted state of decline is the moral foundation of the ruling class. The rule of law in Russia is barely palpable. Georgiy Satarov, a former aide to President Yeltsin, has estimated that "corruption has cost Russia over 50 billion rubles a year, or more than the 1997 budgets for science, education, health, and culture combined."⁴ Corruption often flows throughout society. Reversing a cultural trend of such a fundamental nature will not be easily or quickly accomplished. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn notes that no one in a high position of power has yet been charged for any wrongdoing even when illegal or culpably inefficient activity has clearly taken place. According to Solzhenitsyn, "The authorities operate on a moral imperative: We don't betray our own and we don't uncover their wrongdoing."⁵ One of Vladimir Putin's first moves after he became Russia's acting president on 31 December 1999 was to grant immunity to Yeltsin and his family—an indication that little change in accountability standards is likely among Russian elites. (Putin's behavior toward his rivals may, however, change after the presidential elections on 26 March 2000. After the election, his power base may be strengthened, and he may feel freer to pursue certain policies.) In short, Russia has been uniquely constrained in its responses to U.S. NMD development, and its future options are likely to be similarly constrained.

Given Russia's constrained condition, its objectives regarding U.S. NMD deployment are necessarily limited. Its objectives nonetheless provide a framework to evaluate Russian responses and reach informed judgements about options Moscow is likely to pursue. The objectives include

⁴ Georgiy Satarov, quoted in Itar-Tass, Moscow, 18 June 1998, quoted in Ronald R. Pope, "The Rule of Law and Russian Culture—Are They Compatible?" *Demokratizatsiya: The Journal of Post-Soviet Democratization* 7 (Spring 1999), 205.

⁵ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "What Kind of Democracy is This?" *New York Times*, 4 January 1997. Available [Online] <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/aleksand.htm> (27 November 1999).

implicit aims as well as goals expressly articulated in official statements. The implicit aims can be inferred from Russia's actions. At the level of grand strategy, the objectives are primarily a direct reflection of the Russian concerns discussed in the previous chapter—that is, national interests in security, prestige, and pragmatism. Integral to Russia's national interests—as Russian elites define them—are maintaining strategic nuclear parity with the United States and constituting one of the poles of a multi-polar world.

The grand strategy objectives are supported by several practical objectives. In order to maintain prestige and ensure security, Russia seeks to guarantee its territorial integrity and rebuild its international influence. The United States is perceived as a general threat because Washington can influence events around the globe. Russia considers it a fundamental need to counter U.S. influence in international affairs. It has found China and even France willing partners in that regard. The objective shared by these powers is to isolate the United States, preventing it from enjoying coalition support in its endeavors, particularly NMD. With respect to U.S. NMD, Russia has argued that the international impact of a unilateral U.S. NMD decision would be unacceptably harmful, has sought to ensure that the United States pays as high a political price as possible for any military advantage it pursues, and has endeavored to fix the blame on the United States for any military measures that Russia or other nations choose to pursue in response to U.S. NMD. The first step toward realizing these goals has been in the area of public diplomacy—communicating messages to mass and elite public opinion throughout the world, and in NATO countries in particular.

U.S. NMD development has successfully passed some remarkable milestones and gained renewed U.S. domestic support in 1999 and early 2000. Russian responses have flourished as

well. Russian responses to U.S. interest in NMD can be grouped into three categories: public diplomacy oriented towards influencing public opinion; a formal diplomatic campaign intended to sway foreign governments; and military gestures designed to send signals about Russian capabilities and options. The effort to dissuade the United States has been substantial both in scope and orchestration—though it is not without contradictions. Furthermore, these three categories should be seen as overlapping. Influencing public opinion is a way to sway foreign governments, and the signals sent by military gestures may be received by public opinion as well as governments.

1. Public Diplomacy

Russian declaratory policy has sought as a chief objective to isolate the United States and even to separate Washington from traditionally close U.S. allies. While one must be cautious in attributing causation, the efforts appear to have been at least partly successful. The Russian effort has sought to wrest the “moral high ground” from the United States. Russia has sought to vilify the United States, accusing it of damaging the cause of non-proliferation, provoking the initiation of an arms race, and undermining the sanctity of treaties. The United States is accused in the Russian media of seeking to ensure its invulnerability to the peril of its adversaries and allies alike. Russia also charges that U.S. NMD deployment and the attendant modification to or withdrawal from the ABM Treaty would undermine the entire body of arms control treaties and agreements. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov has stated, “If the U.S. is trying to destroy this system [non-proliferation treaties and global strategic balance], then it will have an important impact on world

politics and will lead to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.”⁶ These allegations have in many instances resonated with the media overseas as well as within the United States.

The Russian effort to isolate and discredit the United States finds a natural audience among a large number of countries. It is not difficult to build consensus against a country that seeks a new advantage when the technology and expense involved exclude all others. Those incapable of pursuing NMD prefer to promise not to pursue it, and thereby deny NMD options to the United States. Charles de Gaulle, defending France’s pursuit of a strategic nuclear program despite international interest in the 1963 Partial Test Ban Treaty, dismissed the significance of countries incapable of acquiring nuclear arms joining in support of such a treaty. “Many people are willing to declare, if pressed on the matter, that they have no intention of visiting the moon.”⁷ The fact that other nations can not in the near term pursue an NMD capability makes them willing critics of the United States, especially if the U.S. efforts are portrayed as to their detriment. Russia has thus seized upon an effective tactic. Yuri Snegirev, a Russian journalist, has attempted to evoke concern over the potential consequences of U.S. military invulnerability—as if this was an achievable goal and when in fact the U.S. government is considering only a limited NMD capability. Implicit in his remarks is a warning to all nations; the attempt to instill fear and establish common ground with other countries is transparent. “As shown by many centuries of

⁶Igor Ivanov, quoted in Bu Robert J. Saiget, “AFP: Yeltsin. Li Peng Opposes US’s NMD System.” *Hong Kong AFP*, 9 December 1999. Transcribed by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 9 December 1999 (FBIS-FTS19991209001037).

⁷Charles de Gaulle, speech of 28 September 1963, in Charles de Gaulle, *Discours et messages: Pour l’effort, août 1962-décembre 1965* (Paris: Plon, 1970), 137, quoted in David S. Yost, “France,” *The Allies and Arms Control*, eds. Fen Osler Hampson, Harald Von Riekhoff, and John Roper (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 164.

experience, the one who has a monopoly on something sooner or later will be tempted to take advantage of this 'in some way.'"⁸

To isolate the United States, Russia is attempting to capitalize on three important touchstones: first, the national security concerns of specific countries; second, the international arms control and non-proliferation agenda; and third, widespread resentment, particularly in some quarters, about U.S. economic and political-military pre-eminence. On the first matter, Russia has asserted that U.S. NMD decision-making is a threat to the national security interests of specific countries as well as a destabilizer of traditional alliances. The Russian Ambassador to Austria, Vladimir Grinin, has evoked a key security concern of the NATO alliance: "In fact, this [anti-missile plan] would lead to the creation of two categories of security zones within the Western Alliance: the United States with an increased and the rest of NATO with a reduced security."⁹ The intent of this rhetoric is clearly divisive. That the NATO allies have genuine concerns became evident with Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott's November 1999 trip to Europe to discuss the U.S. NMD plans at NATO headquarters. According to some accounts, this was the first formal high-level discussion of the topic in the North Atlantic Council—albeit late in the game in the opinion of some European allies. The comments of a European diplomat at NATO headquarters suggest that at least two of the Russian claims have resonated within the Western Alliance.

⁸ Yuri Snegirev, "The Laser Race: Engineer Garin's Hyperboloid Will Appear in Space at any Moment Now," *Moscow Izvestiya*, 22 December 1999, 8. Translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, entitled "Russians Fear Losing Space-Based Arms Race," 22 December 1999 (FBIS-CEP19991222000048).

⁹ Vladimir Grinin, addressing journalists in Austria, quoted in Burkhard Bischof, "Russian Ambassador Hopes That United States Will Be Sensible," *Vienna Die Presse*, 18 November 1999, 4. Translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service entitled "Russian Envoy Warns Against Planned US Antimissile System," 18 November 1999 (FBIS-FTS19991118000872).

This issue could end up driving a stake through the heart of the alliance,... First there is the danger that it will cause the Russians and the Chinese to ratchet up the arms race by finding ways to beat missile defenses. But there is also the fear that if the system works, American and European security interests will no longer be bound by exposure to the same threats.¹⁰

The second touchstone that Russian diplomats have appealed to concerns the international arms control and non-proliferation agenda. Russia asserts that the United States is acting contrary to the interests of all of the signatories to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the entire body of arms control agreements. In particular, the Russians allege that U.S. NMD would undermine the ABM Treaty, which—they assert—is the cornerstone of strategic arms limitations. In November 1999, Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon restated the oft-repeated Clinton administration perspective on the ABM Treaty: “We think the ABM Treaty is a fundamental building block of arms control.”¹¹

Comments by Russian officials embrace this view, but give it a biased slant. For example, Russian Ambassador Vladimir Grinin states, “If the United States should realize its plans to install an anti-missile system and violate the ABM Treaty, this would bring the worldwide disarmament process to a standstill.”¹² The United States does not, to be sure, intend to “violate the ABM Treaty.” The Clinton administration is seeking to negotiate amendments to the treaty. Furthermore, the treaty provides an option for legal withdrawal. The Chief of the Russian military’s Central Research Institute, Major General Vladimir Dvorkin, declared, “If that stone

¹⁰ William Drozdiak, “Possible U.S. Missile Shield Alarms Europe,” *Washington Post*, 6 November 1999, A1.

¹¹ Kenneth H. Bacon, USIA Foreign Press Center Briefing, 21 October 1999. Available [Online] http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Oct1999/t10211999_t1020asd.html 17 November 1999.

¹² Vladimir Grinin, quoted in Burkhard Bischof, “Russian Ambassador Hopes That United States Will Be Sensible.”

[the ABM Treaty] is removed, the whole system of treaties will collapse.”¹³ The Russian viewpoint has been widely accepted in the Western media—despite the fact it remains unsubstantiated.

The grounds of the Russian allegation are questionable. Henry Kissinger contests the Russian argument on the grounds that it misrepresents the historical context of the ABM Treaty. He argues that the ABM Treaty was accepted by the Nixon administration because of the declining interest within the United States in defensive systems and because of the U.S. interest in establishing a ceiling on the Soviet build up of offensive weapons. According to Kissinger, “Many who treat the ABM Treaty as the cornerstone of arms control misunderstand the original impetus for it. And the contrast between the situation of 1972 and today’s is stark.”¹⁴

The assertion that the ABM Treaty is the quintessence of arms control and non-proliferation efforts is widely repeated in media around the world. Deleterious effects on the arms control and non-proliferation agenda are perhaps the most commonly accepted undesirable outcome of U.S. NMD deployment. The Russians warn that arms control agreements would collapse and that an arms race would likely ensue, bringing with it Cold War-type instability. Igor Ivanov, Russian Foreign Minister, has stated that any amendment of the ABM Treaty would be a “serious mistake” and could undermine stability between Russia and the United States.¹⁵ In a subsequent statement the Russian government indicated that it might accept a minor

¹³ Vladimir Dvorkin, quoted in David Hoffman, “Russia Tests an ABM Amid Warnings to U.S.,” *International Herald Tribune*, 4 November 1999, 5.

¹⁴ Henry Kissinger, “The Next President’s First Obligation,” *Washington Post*, 9 February 2000, 21.

¹⁵ Igor Ivanov, quoted in “Albright Urges Russia to Allow Changes to ABM Treaty,” *Agence France Presse* 2 February 2000, translated by Russia Today. Available [Online] <http://www.russiatoday.com/news.php3?id=131061> (11 February 2000).

amendment—relocating the ABM site in the United States permitted by the 1974 protocol to the ABM Treaty.¹⁶

The French government's official response indicates that it ostensibly agrees with the Russian assertions. French President Jacques Chirac wrote to President Clinton warning of risks in the incongruence between strategic arms control and the combined signal of the U.S. pursuit of ABM Treaty amendments and the U.S. Senate's October 1999 refusal to ratify the CTBT. At the 4 November 1999 meeting with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, "the French leader described their common view that 'any calling into question of the ABM Treaty would bring danger and destabilization' for the rest of the world."¹⁷

Another key element of Russian public diplomacy is to ensure that the blame for any arms race and military buildup following a U.S. NMD deployment decision is borne by the United States. Russia has indicated that it has military options that are economically feasible, and has directly stated that it will be forced to defeat any U.S. defensive systems in order to maintain its strategic deterrent. Major General Vladimir Dvorkin declared that Russia has the capability to produce "modern means of penetrating anti-missile defense.... These are measures we can afford."¹⁸

Russian politicians and strategic experts also have insisted that rearmament is necessary and achievable, despite the country's economic woes. Nikolai Sokov suggests that acting Russian

¹⁶ Jane Perlez, "Russian Aide Opens Door a Bit to U.S. Bid for Missile Defense," *New York Times*, 19 February 2000, A3.

¹⁷ Jacques Chirac, quoted in Jim Hoagland, "America the Menacing," *The Washington Post National Weekly Edition*, 8 November 1999, 5.

¹⁸ Vladimir Dvorkin, quoted in David Hoffman, "Russia Tests an ABM Amid Warnings to U.S."

President Vladimir Putin, a pragmatic leader, will ensure that the United States bears the blame for its strategic aspirations.¹⁹ Russia is portraying itself as the underdog, with some apparent success—yet, its human rights abuses in Chechnya have mitigated the credibility of that position somewhat. Recent diplomatic efforts demonstrate that Russia intends to ensure that responsibility for an international arms race—especially among the nuclear powers—falls on the United States.

Russian officials have stated directly that U.S. NMD efforts will induce China to increase its arms spending. Chinese economic growth and military expenditures make the warning all the more credible, though it is impossible to know how much Chinese military effort can be accurately attributed to U.S. NMD. According to a former Russian Deputy Defense Minister, Andrei Kokoshin, “The situation in which China has a handful of barely useable missiles could change into a force of 60-80 weapons with multiple warheads.”²⁰ Evoking memories of volatile and dangerous Cold War strategic scenarios, Kokoshin “accused the United States of increasing the risk of this development in China by seeking to change the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and leaving the impression that Washington wants to change the rules of nuclear deterrence.”²¹

Both Russia and China have argued that any military growth is justified because of the need to counter the United States. However, Russia does not appear to be significantly constrained by treaties from pursuing its objectives. Far more limiting are its economic woes. Aside from exceptions such as maintaining MIRVed ICBMs and continuing the Topol-M ICBM

¹⁹ Nikolai Sokov, *Foreign Policy Under Putin: Pro-Western Pragmatism Might Be a Greater Challenge to the West* (Monterey, CA: Center for Non-Proliferation Studies, 1999). Available [Online] <http://cns.miis.edu/cres/sokov.htm> (3 February 2000).

²⁰ Andrei Kokoshin, quoted in Joseph Fitchett, “Chinese Nuclear Buildup Predicted,” *International Herald Tribune*, 6-7 November 1999, 1.

²¹ Joseph Fitchett, “Chinese Nuclear Buildup Predicted,” *International Herald Tribune*, 6-7 November 1999, 1.

program, noteworthy Russian strategic nuclear posture responses to U.S. NMD appear to be unfeasible in the near term.

The third touchstone that Russia has referenced in its public diplomacy is that of U.S. preeminence in world affairs. Russia has attempted to create or exploit the impression that the United States is a hegemonic superpower bent on maintaining a unipolar strategic environment. The thrust of this Russian message is twofold: the United States wants to become invulnerable, clearing the way for its influence upon international affairs without risks; and the United States wants to create impediments to the emergence of a peer competitor. The message is intended, in particular, for the European Union and China. According to Yuri Chkanikov and Andrei Shoumikhin, "The Americans are hiding their true intentions, that is, the desire to obtain global superiority and 'invincibility,' by pretending that the NMD system is exclusively intended to deal with the threat of the so-called Third World rogues."²² A French newspaper article indicates that the Russian position is shared by some sectors of public opinion in Europe.

The Americans...are to have an absolute weapon that will make them invincible.... The United States is determined to be the only ones to master the knowledge that will enable them to possess such a capability.... The United States is likely to long remain 'the world's sole policeman' thanks to these anti-missile missiles.²³

U.S. leaders have frequently insisted that the intent of the United States is not to undermine strategic stability or to compromise mutual vulnerability between Russia and the United States, but to provide for the failure of deterrence in the case of smaller states with

²² Yuri Chkanikov and Andrei Shoumikhin, "Russian Security Requirements and the U.S. Limited National Missile Defense System: Is Accommodation Possible?" *Comparative Strategy* 17 (July-September 1998): 293.

²³ Jean-Pierre Biot, "Invincible United States Imparts New Boost to Star Wars," *Paris Match*, 7 October 1999, 95. Translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, entitled "Paris Paper: NMD Obviates Integrated European Defense," 1 October 1999 (FBIS-FTS19991001000988).

irrational leaders or objectives that might not be responsive to retaliatory deterrence threats. U.S. National Security Advisor Samuel Berger expressed this view during the Cochran Bill debate: "The Administration has made clear to Russia that deployment of a limited NMD that required amendments to the ABM Treaty would not be incompatible with the underlying purpose of the ABM Treaty, i.e., to maintain strategic stability and enable further reductions in strategic nuclear arms."²⁴ Berger added, "The ABM Treaty has been amended before, and we see no reason why we should not be able to modify it again to permit deployment of an NMD effective against rogue nation missile threats."²⁵ The responses of Russia and other nations suggest that the U.S. position is unacceptable to powers that judge that U.S. NMD would threaten their interests.

Tod Lindberg, the editor of the Heritage Foundation's *Policy Review*, has suggested that those opposing U.S. NMD profess to do so under the heading of arms control principles, yet are in fact pursuing their own national interests—the very thing they fault the United States for doing. According to Lindberg,

The reasserted enthusiasm with which Russia, China, and France now view the ABM Treaty is not ultimately a product of some ideological attachment to the theory of nuclear deterrence, according to which the international system is stable only if nuclear states are vulnerable to destruction at the hands of other nuclear powers. It is, instead, a product of the blunt recognition that missile defense will make the United States still more powerful, because [it will be] less vulnerable. Missile defense is something the United States alone, among the powers of the world, is on the cusp of being able to create and deploy.²⁶

²⁴ Samuel R. Berger, letter to Senator Carl Levin regarding the Cochran bill to Deploy National Missile Defenses, 3 February 1999. Available [Online] <http://www.clw.org/coalition/berg0299.htm> (27 November 1999).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Tod Lindberg, "America Unbound: This Country Needs Missile Defense," *Washington Times*, 9 November 1999.

The opportunistic aspect of the Russian position against U.S. NMD is evident. Yet, the partnership Russia has garnered in its diplomatic campaign against U.S. NMD suggests that its efforts have not been entirely in vain. The *prima facie* evidence of this success is the UN resolution approved on 1 December 1999—the keystone of Russia's formal diplomatic efforts to thwart U.S. missile defense intentions.

2. Diplomatic Campaign

The events of the last year reveal a determined effort on the part of the Russians to conduct formal diplomacy that is consonant with their public declaratory policy. The foremost Russian endeavors in this regard include: treaties with North Korea; talks and cooperation with China; the December 1999 ABM Treaty resolution and other UN proposals; and guarded engagement with the European Union. Russia's intentions for its diplomatic campaign are to strengthen its ties with its neighbors and to assert its international power vis-à-vis the United States in general and U.S. NMD in particular.

The keystone of Russian diplomacy during 1999 was the majority vote for the "Resolution on the Maintenance and Adherence of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty." This resolution, which was jointly submitted by Russia, China, and Belarus, passed by a vote of eighty to four with sixty-eight abstentions in the UN General Assembly on 1 December 1999. The resolution calls on the parties to the ABM Treaty "to preserve and strengthen it through full and strict compliance."²⁷ The Russian intention is to see the ABM Treaty upheld by wide international support.

In a similar vein, Russia and China have petitioned the UN Disarmament Conference to work to enact a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space. Representatives to the February-

²⁷ United Nations. "General Assembly Calls for Strict Compliance with 1972 ABM Treaty, as It Adopts 51 Disarmament. International Security Texts," 1 December 1999, press release GA/9675, 1.

March 2000 conference from both nations insisted that prevention of an arms race in space was completely dependent on the viability of the ABM Treaty.²⁸

Diplomatically, Russia has also sought to establish ties with countries in Asia. Its rapprochement with China has been characterized not only by Moscow-Beijing cooperation in coauthoring UN resolutions, but by their conducting high level visits, coordinating theater missile defense (TMD) research, and providing *carte blanche* support for one another's internal suppression of dissent. The current amicability of the relationship—overriding decades of distrust and enduring border concerns—seems propelled primarily by a shared disdain for U.S. influence.

Russian designs also extend elsewhere in Asia. Russia has recently concluded a treaty of mutual friendship with North Korea, including an important commitment not to interfere in each other's internal affairs or to support a nation or coalition doing so. Russia has also made overtures to both Vietnam and Cuba, old communist allies of the Soviet days. Additionally, it has made significant inroads to India—a course of action, however, that complicates Russian engagement with China.

Finally, Russia has approached Western European nations with a view to undermining their relations with the United States. Russia appears to be seeking any decoupling it can achieve between the European Union (EU) and NATO, and between the EU and the United States. Russia's success with France has progressed the farthest because of the shared interest in a multipolar world. Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov, addressing the French Senate in October 1999, stated,

²⁸ United Nations. "Russian Federation, China Stress Importance of Addressing Prevention of Outer Space Arms Race in Disarmament Conference," 24 February 2000, press release DCF/390, 1.

Undermining of the [ABM] Treaty...will effectively curtail the whole process of nuclear disarmament, put into question the agreements in the field of strategic offensive efforts and spur the nuclear-missile race. The dramatic consequences of that step, if it is made, I think, are obvious both for international stability and the security of each individual state.²⁹

The French response to Russian diplomacy has been positive. Russia's Chechen campaign has, however, drawn considerable condemnation from France. While expressing the French position on the impending U.S. decision on NMD, French Defense Minister Alain Richard asserted that he was speaking for all of Europe.

If the Americans were to limit their ambitions to a system directed against the uncontrolled states, in concertation with their European partners and the Russians, the risk of destabilization would be less. At any rate, the Europeans are unanimous in their agreement to call on them to reflect on the international repercussions of their choice.³⁰

3. Military Gestures

Russia has made military gestures in recent years that provide indications of its intentions and priorities. Russian military activity relevant to U.S. NMD has included exercises, announcements regarding ongoing research and development, and reminders to the world of its nuclear capabilities. These activities appear to support three important Russian objectives: posturing toward foreign nations, maintaining or bolstering morale within the military, and maintaining legitimacy with the Russian people. The Russians have implied, consistent with their public diplomacy campaign, that their military gestures are responses to Western

²⁹ Igor Ivanov, speech in the French Senate 27 October 1999, quoted in Moscow Ministry of Foreign Affairs WWW, 27 October 1999. Transcribed by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 29 October 1999 (FBIS-FTS19991029000920).

³⁰ Alain Richard, quoted in an interview by Jean-Gabriel Fredet, "Purpose of a European Armed Force," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 16-22 December 1999, 36-37. Translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, entitled "French Defense Minister on Europe Defense," 5 January 2000 (FBIS-FTS20000105001083).

dominance—U.S. NMD development as well as NATO operations and expansion. However, it is evident from the Russian domestic situation that some of the Russian responses were also essential on other grounds. Nonetheless, Russia has demonstrated that it can respond militarily, though at significant cost; its responses have therefore been carefully tailored within the country's means.

Several of Russia's military gestures appear to be directly related to U.S. NMD development. Russian declarations have in many cases confirmed this. On 2 November 1999, Russia conducted a test of its own ABM system which surrounds Moscow. The firing of a short range interceptor rocket was the first test of the defensive system in six years.³¹ In another gesture, the Russian Air Force conducted a long range bomber exercise with aircraft designed for the delivery of nuclear-capable cruise missiles. Mikhail Oparin, chief of long-range aviation praised the forces under his command: "The 37th Air Army operated well, and showed that Russia has strong wings."³² The exercise Zapad-99, conducted in June 1999, was particularly significant because it demonstrated that a second leg of Russia's triad is still operational—a strategic threat to the United States against which NMD would have no effect. An article in a Russian military weekly newspaper stated, "It would appear that the 37th Air Army will surprise

³¹ David Hoffman. "Russia Tests an ABM Amid Warnings to U.S.," *International Herald Tribune*, 4 November 1999.

³² Mikhail Oparin, interviewed by Sergey Borisov, "'Success:' Good News From the Long-Range Bombers—According to 37th Air Army Commander Mikhail Oparin, the Pilots From Engels Are Ready to Transfer the Bombers From Ukraine to Russia," *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 2-8 July 1999. Translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, entitled "37th Air Army Cmdr on Zapad-99 Role," 17 July 1999 (FBIS-FTS19990716001791).

the Alliance strategists even more next year... in 2000 plans are to fly to the Cam Ranh air base in Vietnam, and also to 'drop in' on Cuba,"³³

In November-December 1999, Russia also conducted ballistic missile tests and made announcements regarding its capability to place MIRVs on its Topol-M—the newest and most advanced Russian ICBM currently being deployed within Russia. A study authored by a Russian panel, released in early 1999, stated that if the Topol-M has three to four warheads Russia should be confident of its strategic deterrent.³⁴ The implication is that the Russian deterrent will function, even given limited U.S. NMD deployment.

B. RUSSIAN OPTIONS

Russia has a variety of options that it could employ to further its national interests regarding U.S. NMD deployment. Those options are most readily distinguished by whether they are supported by the more hardline traditionalist approach or by the more pragmatic approach. Russia's possible courses of action include: military options; diplomacy with the West, particularly negotiations with the United States regarding the ABM Treaty; and major political shifts or upheavals. The course of action Russia chooses will likely be a combination of the former two, that is, military options and negotiations. Such a course of action is dependent on the third possibility not occurring—that is, the current political system must remain relatively stable. The assumption of stability should never be taken for granted, particularly in the Russian case. The

³³ Ilya Kedrov, "'Nation's Weapon' Returned to Motherland," *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye*, 12 November 1999. Translated by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, entitled "Rebasing of Strategic Bombers From Ukraine to Russia," 3 December 1999 (FBIS-CEP19991203000054).

³⁴ "Experts Suggest Multi-Warhead Capability For Russian Missiles," *Inside Missile Defense*, 9 February 2000, 1.

rampant corruption; the poor economic, health, and environmental prospects; the growing anti-Western sentiment; and the increased re-militarization make Russia susceptible to radical shifts.

1. Military Options

Russian military options fall into four categories: offensive force structure improvements; promotion of the proliferation of ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction; defensive force structure improvements; and the possible formation of anti-American military coalitions or alliances.

Russian hardliners have repeatedly threatened to build up offensive weapons to counter the attrition that a U.S. missile defense might achieve. Penetration aids such as decoys, maneuvering missiles, and MIRVed ICBMs are said to be economically feasible solutions to defeat U.S. missile defenses. Devices and techniques to aid penetration would, however, require research and development as well as procurement expenditure. Russian statements regarding current research suggest that the limited funds available are being spent on other programs. A rearmament program that would generate increased inventories of ICBMs has been deemed economically infeasible by Dean Wilkening, a ballistic missile defense expert at Stanford University's Center for International Security and Cooperation.³⁵

The projected START III negotiations also suggest that there is no possibility of Russia maintaining even its existing number of strategic nuclear weapons. Despite U.S. proposals to modify the ABM Treaty, Russian negotiators are calling for START III ceilings of 1000 to 1500 warheads, and it is the United States that is unwilling to commit to levels below 2000 warheads.

³⁵ Dean Wilkening, *The International Impact of U.S. National Missile Defenses* (Stanford, CA: Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, 1999). Available [Online] <http://cns.miis.edu/research/mnsg/nmd.pdf> (11 December 1999).

"Russia's defense minister has said publicly that Russia probably could afford to possess no more than 500 warheads by 2012."³⁶ Another option, extension of the service life of existing strategic forces, is also available, yet not without significant expense and the risk of decreasing reliability. The rates at which Topol-M ICBMs are being fielded to replace obsolescent systems suggest that Russia's strategic force structure will decline quantitatively.

Despite its economic woes, Russia maintains that it is developing advanced technology weapons that can bolster its deterrent capability. The Russian media have reported research in the field of directed energy weapons and battlefield nuclear weapons, and have alluded to some form of "super-weapon."³⁷ Russian officials have repeatedly declared that Russia can counter U.S. defenses economically and effectively. However, the contradiction between these declarations and their resistance to approving U.S. NMD via an agreed amendment to the ABM Treaty is not resolved in Russian statements.

A second military option Russia could pursue is to promote the proliferation of ballistic missile or WMD technology. Russian declaratory policy holding that the United States NMD policy would undermine all arms control and non-proliferation treaties and agreements could hypothetically lead to an attempt to justify encouraging proliferation as a defensive measure. Some Russians have advocated such an approach as a way of adding to America's strategic problems and thereby cutting down U.S. power. Anton Surikov has stated that Russia might:

Resort to selling its nuclear and missile military technologies to such countries as Iran, Iraq, and Algeria, after the Islamic forces come to power in the latter country. Russia may even conclude a direct military alliance with some of these countries, Iran above all; and within the framework of this agreement Russian

³⁶ Steven Mufson. "Russia: Cut Arsenal to 1,500 Warheads," *Washington Post*, 28 January 2000. 17.

³⁷ Yuri Snegirev. "The Laser Race: Engineer Garin's Hyperboloid Will Appear in Space at any Moment Now," 8.

troops and tactical nuclear weapons would be stationed on the coast of the Persian Gulf and Straits of Hormuz.³⁸

There are significant economic incentives for Russian enterprises to engage in such activities, even though they could be counter-productive for Russia's own diplomatic status and national security. However, it is possible that proliferation is being carried out covertly in selected cases. Reported and potential Russian and Chinese contributions to WMD proliferation weaken the credibility of the arguments advanced by these countries against U.S. NMD based on non-proliferation rationales.

A third military option is that of defensive force structure. Russia continues to maintain and test the ABM system that has defended Moscow for decades. The strategic culture of Russia has always favored the defensive. A BMD system would likely appeal to Russian public opinion and meet national security interests. One Russian presidential candidate, Grigory Yavlinsky, the Yabloko party leader, has stated that he believes Russia and other European nations should "set up a limited anti-missile defense system designed for a hundred missiles" based on Russian technology.³⁹ U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on her February 2000 trip to Moscow suggested that the need for strategic BMD should be a Russian concern.⁴⁰ However, it is economically impossible for Russia to pursue a strategic ballistic missile defense capability

³⁸ Anton Surikov, Defense Research Institute, *Special Institute Staff Suggests Russia Oppose NATO and the USA*, October 1995, ADVAB 1017 (Sandhurst, England: Conflict Studies Research Centre, Royal Military Academy, April 1996), 7.

³⁹ Grigory Yavlinsky, quoted in "Yavlinsky: Russia, Europe Need Anti-Missile Umbrella," *Moscow Interfax*, 31 January 2000. Transcribed by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 31 January 2000 (FBIS-FTS20000131001793).

⁴⁰ Madeleine Albright, quoted in "Albright Urges Russia to Allow Changes to ABM Treaty," *Agence France Presse* 2 February 2000, translated by Russia Today. Available [Online] <http://www.russiatoday.com/news.php3?id=131061> (11 February 2000).

significantly greater than the existing Moscow system. If Russian leaders deem it worthwhile to procure NMD capability, they will have to look to the United States to develop NMD on a cooperative basis.

The fourth military option is for Russia to establish alliances or military cooperation arrangements with other powers. The developments in Sino-Russian relations and the recent treaty between North Korea and Russia indicate an anti-Western perspective in Moscow's security concerns. Russian relations with China are built on shared disdain for U.S. and Western dominance. Russia brings to the relationship a powerful nuclear arsenal, first-rate scientific and technological capabilities, and a conventional weapons industry in need of buyers. China has its steadily expanding economic power to offer. The apparent effect of U.S. NMD is to provide a highly visible cause for the two nations to rally against. George Perkovich, director of the W. Alton Jones Foundation, states, "Ballistic missile defenses have become the hub where relations with Russia and China intersect."⁴¹ An alliance between Russia and China would nonetheless be troubled by a multitude of long-standing issues. Therefore, a substantial enduring alliance is unlikely, but military and political cooperation may increase. China and Russia have discussed options for jointly developing a TMD system.⁴²

North Korea and Russia concluded a friendship treaty in February 2000. This initiated a new chapter in relations that had been chilled since Russia established relations with South Korea in 1990. The agreement does not establish an alliance, but commits each party to honor the

⁴¹ George Perkovich, quoted in Elizabeth Becker, "Allies Fear U.S. Project May Renew Arms Race," *New York Times*, 20 November 1999, 5.

⁴² "Beijing and Moscow Consulting on U.S. Missile Defense Plan for Asia," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, vol. 5, 12 March 1999.

sovereignty of the other. A report by the Korean Central News Agency stated, "Both sides confirm that, on the basis of this treaty, the two contracting parties are obliged not to conclude any treaty or agreement with a third country nor join in its action or step, if they stand against sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of any of the parties."⁴³ Rapprochement between Russia and the remaining communist powers is a reflection of the tendency for Russia to act in a Soviet manner and to approach old allies in anticipation of confrontation with the West. None of these approaches seems to offer long-term solutions to Russia's endemic problems.

2. Diplomatic Options

The key diplomatic option is that of negotiations with the United States. The focus of those negotiations will be the ABM Treaty. The ABM Treaty presents two mutually exclusive and perhaps pivotal options: strict compliance with the treaty as it was last amended, or agreed modifications. The decision the Russians will make on this matter will transform many of the other options into lesser included decisions. Modification of the ABM Treaty has become the symbolic issue of Russo-American relations regarding the strategic balance. The decision has critical implications for Russia's future. The potential consequences of the decision are worthy of careful examination.

It is important to note that Russia can either agree to modify the ABM Treaty or require strict compliance. Russia's decision would then give rise to three options for the United States. If the Russians refuse to agree to modify the treaty, the United States must either abandon its projected NMD deployment or withdraw from the treaty in accordance with Article XV of the

⁴³ Igor S. Ivanov and Paek Nam-Sun, in a joint statement, quoted in "With New Treaty, Russia and North Korea Try To Mend Relations," *New York Times*, 10 February 2000.

ABM Treaty.⁴⁴ If Russia agrees to amend the treaty, the United States may then deploy an NMD system up to the agreed upon limits. Therefore, Russia can oppose or support changes to the ABM Treaty, but it cannot control whether the United States deploys NMD capabilities. Each of the options available to Russia has attendant consequences and risks.

Moscow has transmitted contradictory signals regarding what it may do in response to U.S. pressure to negotiate amendments to the ABM Treaty. The two schools of thought addressed in the previous chapter, traditionalist and pragmatic, are relevant here. The traditionalist or hardline viewpoint is that the Treaty must not be modified in ways that would allow the United States to improve its missile defenses. This viewpoint is maintained by many Russian politicians and senior military officers. Those opposed to amending the treaty appear to have two central objectives: to stand up to the United States and thereby gain international and domestic political influence; and to persuade the United States to postpone the decision on NMD deployment or even to decide against NMD deployment.

At very high levels, Russia has stated that it will not agree to amend the ABM Treaty. The Russian Federation Ambassador to the United Nations, Vasily Sidorov, stated on 24 February 2000 at the UN Disarmament Conference, "The Russian Federation wanted to unambiguously state that it was not holding negotiations on adaptation of the ABM Treaty with the United States."⁴⁵ Similarly, during Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's visit to Moscow,

⁴⁴ Article XV, paragraph 2 of the 1972 ABM Treaty states that "Each Party shall, in exercising its national sovereignty, have the right to withdraw from this Treaty if it decides that extraordinary events related to the subject matter of this Treaty have jeopardized its supreme interests. It shall give notice of its decision to the other Party six months prior to withdrawal from the Treaty. Such notice shall include a statement of the extraordinary events the notifying Party regards as having jeopardized its supreme interests."

⁴⁵ United Nations, "Russian Federation, China Stress Importance of Addressing," 1.

Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov stated that modification of the ABM Treaty was not necessary because the United States-perceived threats did not warrant the potential damage to the objectives of the treaty. "We have been telling our American partners that the modification of the ABM Treaty might undermine the agreement. We are sure that we together could find other answers to those threats from third countries."⁴⁶

Vladimir Putin has also expressed his opposition to modification of the treaty. Putin's argument ignored the "rogue" threat and focused on Russian strategic fears.

Putin also warned the United States anew against trying to modify the ABM accord as a way of proceeding with the deployment of a national missile defense system. He repeated Russian claims that Moscow is prepared to undertake military countermeasures—which will be 'more economical' than the U.S. missile defense system.⁴⁷

Russian positions have involved some contradictions, as noted earlier. Russian leaders maintain that U.S. NMD would threaten the strategic balance while at the same time they declare that Russia could easily defeat U.S. defensive measures—a point asserted by the United States all along. Keith B. Payne has suggested that the hardline response and its attendant contradictions are typical of current Russian thinking. Opposition to ABM Treaty modification "is largely a reflection of the ideological rigidity and ignorance of the Russian leadership and Duma: to oppose anything proposed by Washington is seen as a sign of patriotism and strength in Moscow at this point."⁴⁸ Russia's election year politics have probably influenced this trend as well—the

⁴⁶ Igor Ivanov, quoted in Jane Perlez, "Russians Wary of U.S. Pitch for Missile Defense System," *New York Times*, 1 February 2000, A6.

⁴⁷ "Russia Tests ICBM. Puts Ten New Missile in Service," *Jamestown Foundation Monitor*, vol. 5, 15 December 1999.

⁴⁸ Keith B. Payne, "National Missile Defense: Why Now?" *Foreign Policy Institute Wire* 8 (January 2000).

December 1999 Duma elections and the presidential elections, originally scheduled for June 2000 and now rescheduled for March 2000.

The consequences of the hardline stand are risky. If the United States withdrew from the ABM Treaty, because the Russians would not agree to amend it, Russia would have both gains and losses. Russia would glean the political capital of standing up to the United States, generate the highest political price for the United States, and obtain limited justification for throwing off burdensome arms control requirements. This might mean putting multiple warheads on ICBMs or transferring arms and technology to states selected with a view to deepening America's strategic difficulties. The price of this option for Russia would be significant, given U.S. NMD deployment in the absence of ABM Treaty constraints. Russia would forfeit further influence over U.S. NMD development, would likely lose much of the U.S. aid it currently receives, and most importantly would stand to lose its most powerful leverage to maintain parity in nuclear arsenals with the United States. This final point means that if Russia experienced a decline in its strategic warhead stockpile (which may well be unavoidable), it would have little bargaining power to induce the United States to make commensurate reductions. The concept of parity, heretofore inviolable to the Russians, would likely be lost.

The second school of thought among Russian decision makers is that of pragmatism. The pragmatist takes the realist viewpoint that concessions on the ABM Treaty are a matter of necessity. That is not to say that the practical-minded will completely abandon rhetorical posturing against the West, because that would be a significant departure from old habits and entail a loss of short-term political capital. The pragmatic approach will likely continue the banter for the sake of symbolically standing up to the West, but will avoid any embarrassing showdown.

The lessons of NATO expansion and NATO's use of force in the Kosovo crisis are instructive here. Russia's leaders clamored against them, but in the end accepted both, because they are keenly aware of Russia's inherently weak position.

This pragmatic viewpoint may yet triumph, because it reflects Russia's interests. Those in support of negotiating amendments see as their chief objective getting as many concessions as possible from the United States for what it will likely do anyway. Agreeing to amend the treaty has both consequences and risks.

If Russia agreed to accept amendments in the ABM Treaty to allow the United States to build a limited missile defense, it would stand to make several important gains. Russia would maintain a control mechanism to affect the scope of U.S. NMD; it would have increased capacity to bargain for reductions in U.S. strategic nuclear stockpiles; and it would maintain favorable conditions to receive Western aid and investment. The dominant disadvantage to a decision to accept modifications in the treaty would be a potential loss of face both at home and abroad.

Russians fear that the United States might gain a "break out" capability strategically—that is, once the U.S. NMD infrastructure is established, an increase in radars, interceptor missiles, and associated capabilities would be hypothetically feasible. Russia also may fear that allowing the United States to improve the technology could result in more advanced TMD systems being transferred to U.S. allies. TMD development by Japan and the United States serves as an example. By granting concessions to the United States on the ABM Treaty, Russia could legally pursue NMD technology for itself. However, Russia has little to gain by freeing itself from the ABM Treaty's constraints, because it lacks the economic resources to compete with the United

States. The rhetorical campaign threatening widespread disregard for treaties is based on politics, not military strategy.

C. CONCLUSION

It would be inconsistent with Russian strategic culture and incompatible with Russian objectives for Russia to silently and gently slip into international obscurity. Russia's apparent strategy is threefold: to engage in hardline or vitriolic rhetoric with the West, while not crossing the line of an embarrassing showdown; to capitalize on America's unwillingness to assert its predominance in world affairs; and to persuade the West to subsidize the Russian economy in order to assuage its own fears—while expunging Western influence over Russian policy.

Russian rhetoric critical of U.S. NMD deployment plans will most likely continue. Russia will seek to wrest as much political capital as possible from the United States in so doing. Russian declaratory policy has attempted to reinforce widespread arguments against U.S. NMD circulating in the West. Henry Kissinger states that there are four general arguments opposing U.S. NMD:

- (1) that a workable system cannot be designed;
- (2) that if it was, it would undermine the long-established American strategic doctrine called Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD);
- (3) that it violates the 1972 ABM Treaty and would jeopardize the entire gamut of Russo-American relations;
- (4) that our European allies will interpret an anti-missile program as decoupling the defense of Europe from America, because the United States might be perceived as withdrawing into a Fortress America. (Interestingly, this argument is never heard from our Asian allies.)⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Henry Kissinger, "The Next President's First Obligation," *Washington Post*, 9 February 2000, 21.

These arguments, central to the opposition to NMD, and largely accepted by the Clinton Administration,⁵⁰ have been repeated by Russian commentators.

Russia will continue to improve its military posture, though Russia lacks the economic capacity to compete with the West in fielding new systems. Russian leaders will likely continue limited weapons development and deployment. It has been demonstrated repeatedly that Russia is willing to make tremendous social sacrifices in order to maintain military power and strategic significance.

The military programs that Russia will support remain to be seen. The doctrinal statements and published budgets provide an indication of intentions, but their utility is mitigated by the frequent shifting of resources from strategic pursuits to more immediate operational concerns, as Chechnya bears out. Whether Russia improves its own ballistic missile defenses or increases its offensive capacity, the purposes of U.S. NMD will not be thwarted—that is, a limited defense against “rogue state” attacks.

The bloody Chechen war demonstrates Russian intent and methodology. The execution of the Russian campaign in Chechnya reveals a fundamental difference on the conduct of war between Russia and the Western powers. Russia did not have the capacity to engage in high-technology low-collateral-damage warfare analogous to NATO’s Operation Allied Force in the Kosovo conflict. Russia demonstrated that while it insists on being counted among the first-rate world powers, it does not choose to conduct its activities in conformity with the norms of such powers. Vladimir Putin, Russia’s acting president and leading presidential candidate, has couched the Chechen war in Western speech, but his actions have been inconsistent with his proclamations.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

"As soon as we challenged the bandits [in Chechnya] head on and defeated them, a real step was made toward the supremacy of law and the dictatorship of law that treats everyone equally."⁵¹

The United States and the West as a whole have lent tacit approval to the Russian actions through a consistent unwillingness to censure Russian behavior. The insight into Russian thinking that the Chechen war has provided should be integrated into U.S. decision-making.

It appears that the West has decided, for multiple reasons, to treat Russia as a developing democracy. Legitimizing such a facade may result in the West's self-deception. Solzhenitsyn offers a stinging indictment on the alleged democratic institutions within Russia. "There is no tree grown up from the roots but a dry stake driven into the ground or, as things now stand, an iron rod."⁵² William Odom faults the Clinton administration's foreign policy because it is based "on illusions about Russian realities and possibilities."

Russia simply is not on the path to liberal democracy or to an effective market economy. Periodic assertions that the Russian economy is 'on the mend' or that 'progress toward democracy' may be slow but is continuing, or that 'polarized politics' is a thing of the past are simply misleading.⁵³

Russia continues to display a resistance to Western norms, and growing alienation toward the West under the head of patriotism.

Yet, it appears that while harsh rhetoric is widely employed, there is perhaps a larger constituency to the reduced threat camp than meets the eye. This point may have a key impact on the packaging of U.S. policy decisions. Russia is likely to place the political responsibility for

⁵¹ Vladimir Putin, in an open letter to the Russian electorate, transcribed in "Vladimir Putin's Open Letter to Russian Voters," *Russia Today* from European Internet Network, 26 February 2000. Available [Online] <http://www.russiatoday.com/features.php3?id=137952> (27 February 2000).

⁵² Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, "What Kind of Democracy is This?"

⁵³ William E. Odom, "Clinton 'Quids' Don't Produce Russian 'Quos,'" *Wall Street Journal*, 22 November 1999.

America's NMD choices squarely on the United States, even if Moscow agrees to the ABM Treaty amendments sought by Washington. As Nikolai Sokov has observed, "A pragmatic, cool-headed policy oriented toward Russia's interests... will present a far greater challenge to the West than Yeltsin's emotional oscillations.... Most important [Putin] will position Russia in such a way that it does not bear the blame for confrontation, or its consequences. The burden of choice will be on the West."⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Nikolai Sokov. "Foreign Policy Under Putin."

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IV. ASSESSMENT OF U.S. POLICY AND OPTIONS

The analysis of Russian concerns regarding U.S. NMD deployment as well as Moscow's responses and options in this thesis makes it clear that Russia is focused on its national interests. United States policy and decision-making must be considered from the same perspective—that is, America's national interests. The most outspoken foreign critics of U.S. policy seem unwilling to concede that national interests are a sufficient reason for the Americans to pursue a course of action. These critics nonetheless find nothing wrong with relying on national interests as the criteria by which they assess their own national policy. National interests are critical to sound decision-making whether a nation is powerful or weak. However, prescient decision-making will carefully take into account the impact of international relations on its defense of national interests. A nation must therefore understand what its interests are and how they may be affected by the responses of other nations.

Regarding the prospective decision to deploy a limited NMD system, America must decide what the threats to its interests are, how they can best be countered, what solutions it can afford, and what impact the chosen combination of solutions is likely to have at home and abroad. This is not to say that the analysis is complete once U.S. interests are determined. International negotiations—with allies and others—must occur after U.S. interests are established. In this manner, there is a greater likelihood that the minimal objectives will be attained.

Henry Kissinger's warning that the United States is pursuing a decision on NMD in the wrong order is noteworthy in this regard. He points out that the United States is actively negotiating ABM Treaty amendments with the Russians when it has yet to determine what NMD system is appropriate. In Kissinger's view, "We should suspend further talks with Moscow until

we have decided on the kind of missile defense most in the national interest. That decision should define the parameters of the dialogue.”¹ In essence, the United States is currently attempting to determine what it can gain in concessions from Russia on the ABM Treaty when it has not resolved more foundational issues. Furthermore, the international aspects of the NMD system, as it is currently envisioned, are also being pursued in reverse order. The United States has already approached Britain, asking for London’s views about a possible U.S. decision to upgrade the early warning radar at Fylingdales when the decision to deploy has not been made, and when negotiations with Moscow on ABM Treaty revisions have not been resolved. U.S. interests need to be examined in a more comprehensive manner.

A. RUSSIA

Without equivocation America and the rest of the world have profound interests in the future of Russia. Russia is in a unique set of circumstances in the history of the world. It possesses a nuclear arsenal that can destroy any nation on earth. At the same time it is deeply troubled at the foundational level, with an unstable political and social order. Never before has such a powerful arsenal been held by a country so riddled with problems of corruption and disorder. Russia could become once again a powerful nation with a strong central government, and it might even make progress toward the establishment of legitimate democracy. It also could deteriorate to a condition in which international societal norms are completely abandoned in favor of the aggrandizement of the ruling class. If the latter were to occur, nuclear weapons technology and materials could be proliferated to willing buyers. Furthermore, in such a condition unacceptable environmental damage—particularly with nuclear waste and related

¹ Henry Kissinger, “The Next President’s First Obligation,” *Washington Post*, 9 February 2000, 21.

materials—could profoundly affect the entire globe. These potential outcomes suggest that international action may be required to promote Russia's support for minimal acceptable norms. It is in the U.S. interest to promote stability in Russia and to do so in a timely manner. Inaction or delay could indirectly contribute to undesirable developments in Russia. In most foreseeable circumstances it would, for example, be simpler, less costly, and more manageable for the United States to deal with Russia than to interact with several nuclear-armed successor states. Therefore, the United States should wisely choose an engagement strategy with Russia that avoids contributing to scenarios that are much less favorable than sustaining a cohesive and effective Russian state.

B. STRATEGIC PARITY

A fundamental U.S. foreign policy issue arises with regard to Russia as well as U.S. NMD, the concept of strategic parity. The United States must make a conscious decision as to whether it will continue to use parity with Russia as the only legitimate metric on which to base strategic nuclear arms control agreements. At some point of economic decline within Russia the number of strategic nuclear weapons that Russia can maintain may be reduced to the point that other nations have comparable numbers—China, for example. Russia's defense minister has stated that the country may only be able to afford 500 strategic nuclear warheads by 2012.² Given these circumstances, at some point the United States must consider whether it is in its interests to reduce its own inventory until it is a strategic nuclear peer with Russia and China.

The political-military dynamics of the twentieth century demonstrated that particular forms of government are most effectively dealt with from a position of strength guided by

² Steven Mufson, "Russia: Cut Arsenals to 1,500 Warheads," *Washington Post*, 28 January 2000, 17.

straightforward objectives. Russian history suggests that the United States may better serve its interests and those of other nations, particularly its allies, by adopting a policy whereby Russia is guided to a stable geopolitical position relative to its resources. To be palatable and conducive to peace and stability, such a policy must be diplomatically executed. Every step that Russia makes towards establishing democracy, free markets, and the rule of law must be actively supported and encouraged. At the same time U.S. and Western resolve to see Russia adopt acceptable norms of national behavior must be unwavering and visible.

C. THE ABM TREATY

Once U.S. interests regarding NMD (including the strategic and technical requirements) have been determined, the international aspects of NMD deployment must be considered. As discussed in the previous chapter, the ABM Treaty has both symbolic and practical impact on U.S. NMD deployment, and it is central to negotiations with Russia. At the present time, the ABM Treaty is being discussed in conjunction with arms limitation talks, namely the talks about prospective START III negotiations. Russia has two principal options regarding the treaty. It can negotiate amendments or require strict compliance. The United States in turn has three options: in the presence of a Russian refusal to amend the treaty, the United States may either abandon its NMD designs or withdraw from the treaty; if the Russians agree to amendments, the United States must negotiate for conditions consistent with its long-term objectives.³

The examination of Russian concerns and options in this thesis suggests that a negotiated modification of the ABM Treaty is a likely outcome. Such a solution would allow Russia to avoid

³ Henry Kissinger, regarding ABM Treaty modifications, suggests that "a quick-fix solution is foolhardy and dangerous, for it risks putting our leaders 10 years from now, when technology has moved on, into the same straitjacket they find themselves in today." Henry Kissinger, "The Next President's First Obligation," *Washington Post*, 9 February 2000, 21.

the dangers to its interests and international influence that would be inherent in a U.S. withdrawal from the treaty. Despite its threats of rearmament, Russia has little to gain by abrogating arms control treaties, particularly the ABM Treaty. Russia's rhetorical campaign threatening widespread disregard for arms control commitments is based on politics, not military strategy. Through ABM Treaty modification Russia would retain some control over the scope of U.S. NMD deployments. The United States, equipped with nationally-determined, minimum-acceptable-baseline numbers both for NMD as well as its strategic arsenal—since the ABM Treaty and START agreements are inevitably coupled in any sound analysis—could move away from the metric of parity with Russia through a natural course of events brought on by Russian economic conditions.

D. CONCLUSION

The need for the United States to pursue NMD deployments is likely to be established given the proliferation of ballistic missiles, the behavior of "rogue" nations, the possibility of unauthorized and unintentional launches, and the requirement of sound strategy to have options in the event of a failure of deterrence. These interests are not unique to the United States. Opponents of U.S. NMD have focused on the short-term to bolster their position. They have expressed doubts about the technical feasibility of NMD, and have objected to its cost and the fact that only the United States has the wealth and technology to pursue it. However, in the medium to long term, NMD, if technologically and economically feasible, promises to reduce vulnerability to a significant portion of the threat spectrum for other nations as well.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has indicated to Russia that the United States would be amenable to cooperation regarding BMD technology. During her February 2000 trip to

Russia, she spoke with acting President Vladimir Putin. "Russia and the United States are vulnerable to the same threats—even if we sometimes perceive them differently—[and] we are prepared to cooperate with your government on missile defense."⁴

Despite the cautious response of America's Western European allies, their support is likely to be attainable, given sound policy and adequate dialogue. Resistance to U.S. NMD and the amendment of the ABM Treaty is likely to decrease. "In practice, experts said, Britain and France could tolerate a U.S.-Russian modification of the bilateral treaty because the Europeans no longer believe that Moscow can build a proficient missile defense of its own."⁵ Thus, the British and French national nuclear deterrents are not likely to be nullified by Russian defenses.

It is critical to responsible leadership and strong foreign policy that the advantages of the proposed U.S. NMD system be adequately presented to public opinion domestically and internationally. Kissinger suggests that now is the time for an effective information campaign: "Since the strategic importance of missile defense is independent of its technical characteristics, the interim should be used for educating the American public and for dialogue with our allies in Europe and Asia."⁶

This thesis has examined Russian concerns, responses, and options regarding U.S. NMD. Similar consideration must be given to the interests of Britain, France, and China, the three remaining members of the UN Security Council. Moreover, the concerns of other signatories to

⁴ Madeleine Albright, quoted in "Albright Urges Russia to Allow Changes to ABM Treaty," *Agence France Presse* 2 February 2000, translated by Russia Today. Available [Online] <http://www.russiatoday.com/news.php3?id=131061> (11 February 2000).

⁵ Joseph Fitchett, "Chinese Nuclear Buildup Predicted," *International Herald Tribune*, 6-7 November 1999, 1.

⁶ Henry Kissinger, "The Next President's First Obligation."

the NPT, particularly members of the Atlantic Alliance, are worthy of attention. NMD represents a landmark development in U.S. national security policy, and it is imperative that its constructive and defensive purposes be well understood by America's allies and security partners.

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